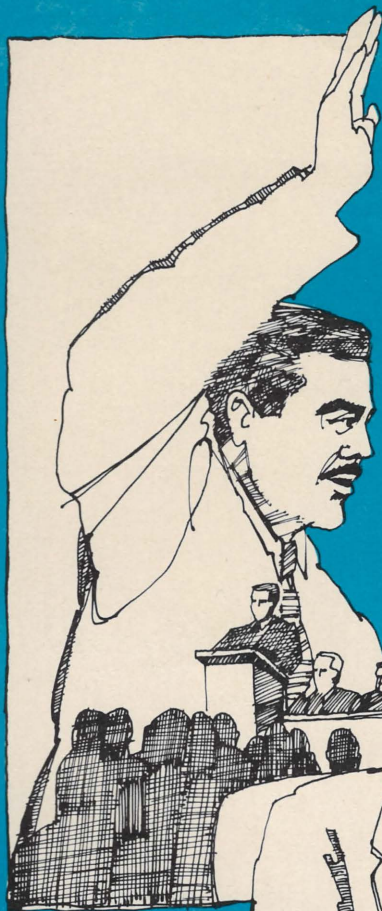


GUIDELINES FOR COMMITTEE AND BOARD MEMBERS



R. Blum

**ROBERT
E. FIRTH**



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On the Light Side

Somebody should appoint a committee to study the abolishment of committees.

A camel is a horse that was designed by a committee.

A committee is a group of the incompetent appointed by the unwilling to do the unnecessary.

A committee is a group that wastes hours and keeps minutes.

Committees are a device of the devil to harass executives and keep them working overtime.

The most useful committee size is three, one of whom is out of town and another of whom is at home sick in bed.

A committee is a group of executives who individually cannot decide what to do and who get together to decide that nothing can be done.

Committees sprout like ragweed; we have them everywhere.

PREFACE

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is widely known for two aspects of its administrative activities—its organization and its use of committees. This book is for the thousands of people who serve or will serve on committees in our churches, schools, hospitals, publishing houses, and conferences.

Probably every leader from the General Conference through the union conferences, local conferences and missions, to the individual churches, every school administrator and teacher in Adventist schools, and every member of the management team of our denominational hospitals, food factories, and publishing houses has at one time or other thought he was suffering from an acute case of committee-mania.

Most of our policies and decisions are made in group meetings, committees, or boards at one level or another. Administrative people spend a considerable part of their working life attending these meetings. They are time consuming and expensive, and they take time that otherwise could be devoted to individual responsibilities. Are they worth the cost?

There is little doubt that Seventh-day Adventist churches, organizations, and institutions do more of their administrative work through committees than most business organizations do. A typical business must perform many of its functions through individual administrative authority to compete in the market place for a profit. Church organizations do not have that objective.

There is a sound reason why we function through committee decisions to a greater degree than most business organizations do. We have been told through the inspired writings of Ellen G. White that this is the manner in which we should carry out the business of the church. Our counsel is that we are to avoid allowing power to become concentrated in the hands of individuals. No part of the church organization must ever be in the position where any person can exert too much power or control over its functions. To avoid this situation, the church and its institutions are controlled by group action, group decisions, and group judgment.

* In this manner, through the concerted judgment of

dedicated men and women, the Lord can best guide and direct the work of His church.*

Having accepted this important principle, we must study how the work of the church can be carried on most effectively by group action. Committees can do some things well, but other things they do ineffectively. There are good and poor ways to conduct committee meetings and choose committee chairmen and members. There are ways to facilitate the work of committees. Relationships, methods, ethics, and in some cases legal responsibilities should be examined.

The purpose of this book is to examine these matters and present certain guidelines for carrying on committee work. If as committee chairmen and committee members we can become better informed in using this technique of denominational management, we will be more effective workers in the Lord's cause and our work will profit from it.

The ideas expressed in this book have been gathered through two decades of teaching undergraduate and graduate courses in management and related subjects. They have come from textbooks, articles, class discussions, lectures, and seminars. Some of these thoughts have come from hundreds of hours spent in committee meetings of many kinds and purposes as committee member (hopefully an active and contributing one) and chairman. The objective of this book is to draw this background of thoughts and ideas together so that they may be useful to people in our churches and church organizations.

This book is especially dedicated to administrators and middle managers in denominational organizations who have been forced to obtain most of their management skills from the university of hard knocks and self-education. If the more sophisticated and ever-increasing group who have received formal education in management find something here they missed in their classrooms, the author will be doubly rewarded.

* Ellen G. White, *Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 259; *Testimony Treasures*, vol. 3, p. 198; *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 216; *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 199; etc.

Chapter 1 explains the function of an administrator, a manager, and a group leader. It discusses concepts of authority and influence in an organization. Readers who occupy leadership positions will find this background chapter especially valuable. Others who serve only occasionally on committees or boards may wish to begin with the summary of chapter 1 on pages 27 and 28 and proceed from there, returning to chapter 1 as questions about management functions arise.

CHAPTER 1

Leaders Need Help

NO MAN is an island." "Two heads are better than one." Trite adages, aren't they? But true! Directing a project or administering any kind of organization cannot be done from an ivory tower. The manager or administrator must accomplish his own or his organization's objectives by working with and through people, and he must have the help of his associates to attain those objectives.

The day of the one-man show has long since departed. Authoritarianism is no longer considered acceptable management procedure except for the smallest of organizations. Adventist conferences, schools, hospitals, and churches do not fit into this category. Even the church pastor soon discovers that he cannot get much done without the help and cooperation of his congregation.

Involved in all this is the whole area of human relations. Although that topic is not the central theme of this book, human relations are intertwined with the discussions throughout these pages.

Certainly committees, by whatever name we happen to call them, are one of the sources of help to the administrator in securing the cooperation of his staff. Before going into the details of how administration by committee can work to the best advantage, we should first examine a few basic management concepts. It is true that these concepts do not belong entirely to the realm of relationships between the administrator and committees. They are general or universal in application. But they will help us in discussing the role of committees.

The Terms Management and Administration

The terms *management* and *administration* will be used interchangeably. *Management* as a term is more difficult to define than is apparent at first glance. Most standard textbooks have loosely defined it as the achieving of objectives through people. Other writers define it as carrying out the functions of planning, organizing, operating, and controlling a firm or organization. The truth of the matter is that management theorists have not yet coined an adequate and generally accepted definition of management. In spite of that, all of us have a pretty good idea of what *management* means.

But one use of the terms *management* and *administration* is not quite so well understood. As the terms are used in this book, they refer to all levels where administration is necessary, not merely the top level of an organization. The department head is also a manager and part of the management team. The church pastor is the administrator of the church, who with his lay leaders must see that a host of church activities are carried out. The foreman of a school industry carries out administrative functions, makes plans, organizes operations, and has controlling functions.

Management, then, includes all those people in the congregation or organization from the top man (known by a wide variety of titles) down to the department head or line supervisor and all administrative levels between. These are the people who for the most part are serving on committees, helping with the various phases of planning and decision making, and to whom various types of authority and responsibility are delegated. Next, then, let us look briefly at what is involved in management.

The Planning Function of Management

Although standard textbooks differ somewhat in terminology and organization of material, the planning function of management is always listed first, followed by the other functions of organizing, operating, and controlling. There has to be planning before any forward steps can be taken. However, even the casual observer soon realizes that man-

agement functions are not done in a set sequence, that a manager does not set aside 8:00 A. M. to 9:00 A. M. every day for planning, 9:00 to 10:00 for organizing, and so on. All the functions of management occur at the same time, all the time, and they merge into one another constantly. Planning of one kind or other is a continuous and necessary part of a leader's responsibility as long as he holds his job. As we shall see more fully in later chapters, the planning function is one of the most effective and desirable ways to use committees. Management can receive more help and backing from subordinates in planning than in any other area. Now a look at the major kinds of planning.

A. *Objectives.* Trying to run an organization without objectives (synonyms are ends and goals) is like navigating an ocean liner without a port of destination. An over-all objective, or goal, is the end result to which all other planning activities are subordinate. Other minor objectives, policies, procedures, and plans must be designed to contribute to the over-all goal.

Long-range, or ultimate, objectives are not easy to construct into concise statements, and often they may appear ambiguous or vague. The reason is simple. The further away your objective is, the less concise or definitive you can be. Long-range plans seldom can be laid out in precise and objective terms. Only plans that are being made for the immediate future can be so handled, and even here careful planners find that they must maintain flexibility and provide for unknown variables.

Likewise, two planners or two organizations would not likely state their long-range objectives in the same way. What is thought to be a long-range objective for one organization may well be thought of as an intermediate objective by another. Examples of long-range objectives for the church might be spreading the gospel to the whole world, increasing church membership to ten million by 1985, reorganizing and consolidating educational facilities, placing all school industries on a profitable basis, and so on. In other words, our long-range objectives tell us what we want to accomplish, sometimes within a stated time (but often not), but do not include other kinds of plans necessary to reach such a goal.

In relation to these stated long-term objectives, an intermediate objective would be to make a certain school industry profitable within eighteen months or to have a new church built for a particular congregation three years from now. Short-term objectives would be to find and hire an efficient well-trained industrial superintendent or to contract with an architect for drawing church plans. Even short-term objectives have to be backed by careful planning. Merely stating objectives does not tell how to carry them out.

One caution in setting objectives should be mentioned. Care needs to be exercised that realistic objectives are chosen. People work hard to achieve a goal or an objective that they know can be attained reasonably, but objectives that are overly idealistic or impossible to reach in a reasonable time discourage efforts to reach them. Pie-in-the-sky objectives are a waste of time and effort, because people question their practicality.

B. *Policies.* Administrators and committees spend many hours making policies, and with good reason. Policies are likely to be used a long time, they cover a great many problems and activities of an organization, and they affect the daily lives of leaders and their subordinates in a multitude of ways. Policies are not easily or lightly formed and nearly always they require the kind of group judgment that can come only from some sort of committee.

About the only way to define a policy is to say that it is a general way to help management carry out an objective. Although this statement is true, it is not overly helpful without examples and further explanations.

For the most part, we use policies as a predetermined way to handle a situation or a problem. Generally, policies are used to handle situations that occur frequently, so that management does not have to take its time or a committee's time to decide every case. We form policies to cover wage scales, vacations, sick leave, discounting of bills, handling student or patient accounts, discipline cases, and so on. Each time a new employee is hired or a bill is paid, we have the basis for deciding how to do it. We do not have to call a special meeting to decide.

When management can avoid having to make repetitive

decisions on routine matters, daily operations run more smoothly and when management and employees both know what the policies are, they know what to expect and plan on.

There are several distinct advantages in the use of policies:

1. The existence and publishing of policies are related to employee morale. Employees who know what is expected of them and what they can expect from management are a far happier group than employees who are not well informed.

2. Policies promote equal treatment and fair play. Employees, students, patients, church members, and others have a tremendous sensitivity to anything that smacks of favoritism or unequal treatment. Where policies are formulated and wisely applied there is seldom reason for complaint.

3. Supervisory effort is economized when policies are used to cover routine matters. This plan leaves supervisory people free to rule by exception or spend their time with cases that do not fit the regular pattern.

4. Considering the administrator's time and energy, policies facilitate the delegation of tasks because subordinates are fully aware of the limits of their decision-making and instruction-giving power. The policies themselves set the guidelines and limits, and the manager does not have to outline his subordinates' tasks in detail.

5. Because policies operate as guidelines, they make control a simple matter for the executive in providing a determinable standard for comparing the progress of subordinates. Do the decisions and activities of subordinates measure up to the policies that have been set? If so, the control function for this situation is satisfied. If conformity is lacking, corrective measures can be taken.

6. Control through the use of policies provides the vehicle for coordination of plans and activities as management strives to accomplish the organization's objectives.

Management must realize, however, that every organization pays a price for establishing and abiding by policies. As in all other activities and relationships where human beings are concerned, there are disadvantages to using policies:

1. The use of policies imposes a degree of rigidity on an

organization. The price is probably worth it, but all administrators must realize that policies set limits on their decision-making prerogatives and alternatives available to them in meeting situations.

2. As a result, administrators, particularly the group known as middle managers, tend to feel stifled. A common complaint among department heads in schools and hospitals and among industrial superintendents is that their initiative and creativity are restricted. They feel bound by policies. It is my observation that in the denomination even top management has a tendency to wall itself in with policy in such a way as to restrict freedom of administrative action. Whether this action is self-protection or an attempt to be doubly sure of conforming to the wishes of an organization's constituency, it is easily overdone anytime management allows policy making to become too elaborate or detailed.

3. Management should always recognize also that policy making is time consuming and thus expensive.

4. The making of new policies always runs into a wall of resistance. Men resist change. Protecting the *status quo* appears to be a common human trait.

Strange as it may sound, the one thing that gives validity to operating through the use of policies is the rule of exception. Man is not clever enough to devise rules or policies that cover any and all contingencies. There are always exceptions. This fact in no way breaks down the principle of using policies to guide an organization. Instead, it points up the need for enough flexibility, sound judgment, and recognition of human needs to realize when exceptions are necessary and should be allowed. If too many exceptions are made, policy revision may be necessary.

I would like to make an observation about the application of policies. There are too many occasions when policy books are used as a crutch for what should be creative thinking. If a man feels there is something he does not want to do, he usually can dig around until he finds a policy that he can interpret in such a way as to substantiate his position. Conversely, if he wants to do something badly enough and a policy seems to be in the way, he generally can find a way to get around it. Administration of policy requires a great deal

of common sense, fair play, and integrity. It can never be an excuse to relieve a leader from applying creative thinking to the problems at hand.

By now we can see that policies are too important to be decided on or constructed by the one man at the top of the organization. He may be the most competent man in the firm, the best thinker, the most articulate, the most highly motivated, and have the true interest of all his subordinates at heart; but that is not enough. Policy making should always be a product of group judgment. Respect for and adherence to policies by subordinates require it. Insofar as is practical the people affected by a policy should have a chance to extend their views on it. The smoothness of the operation thereafter makes the effort worth while.

C. *Procedures.* A procedure is a method of carrying out a policy or an objective, usually by a series of planned steps. These steps, or activities, may be standardized, as in manufacturing or publishing, or for one-time use as in building a church, obtaining accreditation for a school, or conducting an evangelistic campaign.

Typically, procedure development has been more widely seen in industry than in other organizations because a careful study of repetitive operations aids in controlling manufacturing costs and product quality. But procedures are an extremely useful planning device for all kinds of organizations. Hospitals use procedures in admitting and releasing patients and in employing operating-room facilities. Most laboratories in schools, industries, and medical institutions use procedures. All kinds of institutions use preventive maintenance procedures. Accounting offices everywhere use bookkeeping procedures.

The advantages of procedural planning are:

1. The best available methods are widely adopted. Group thinking has developed such procedures, and the literature in various professional fields describes them. By them an operation can be made more efficient.
2. It is not unusual that safety—whether for an employee, a patient, or the consumer of a product—is a factor in a product or service. If so, safety can and must be built into procedures.

By and large, the disadvantages in the use of procedures are similar to those given for policies.

An observation may be pertinent here. Industry seems to have no trouble distinguishing procedures from policies, and often the two will not be found within the covers of the same manual. However, administrators of schools, hospitals, and other institutions have not always been so discriminating in separating these two types of planning tools. In their effort to express necessary guidelines in writing, procedures and policies frequently get mixed up, and the tendency is for the whole mass to take on the authority of policy. The result is that all the administrators find their limits set in detail rather than in general guidelines, as they should be, and all the disadvantages listed concerning policies are multiplied. Procedures should never impose on the decision-making rights of management, as policies frequently do. The distinction is important.

As with other types of planning, group thinking and participation in procedure planning are extremely useful to management. Here is a legitimate and fruitful activity for committees, as will be discussed in more detail in future chapters.

Concepts of Authority, Power, and Influence

Authority is a slippery term. The listener or reader is never sure which of several meanings or connotations may be intended when the word is used. In addition, there is a great deal of misunderstanding concerning how authority is derived, how it should be exercised, and what it permits the administrator to do or not do. It is extremely easy to get all tied up in semantics when discussing authority. First of all, then, we will take a look at meanings of the term and try to determine what it ought to mean in the manager's world of today.

A. *Meanings of Authority.* Sometimes the word *authority* is used to mean that someone is an authority or an expert in his field. An engineer, a lawyer, a surgeon, or a cabinet-maker may be so well informed or experienced in a specialty as to be an authority in it. But this kind of authority

seldom allows a person to command reactions or activity from subordinates. It can mean, of course, that such expertise commands considerable respect and indirectly widens the zone in which subordinates follow legitimate orders or directions. More will be said about that shortly.

Occasionally one will also hear a reference to authority as having the meaning closely related to accountability. A person feels an obligation to perform assigned duties and construes it to be authority, which it really is not automatically. Neither of these two concepts, however, create a great problem in understanding the management meanings of authority.

Historically, authority has come down to us from the early schools of management thought as being closely associated with power. Authority has been the right of management to manage, the right to command or to act, coupled with the ability to supply or withhold what people want, to hire and fire, to promote or not to promote, to control wages, output, and so on. Such is the old authoritarian philosophy of management, centered on the concepts of power and control.

An authoritarian approach to management has had a long tradition in religiously oriented organizations, probably even more than in the business world. Churches and church institutions usually have been led by men with strong personalities and convictions. There probably always has been a little of the philosophy among religious leaders that what they were doing was right because it was God's work, and that in a sense their authority came from God. Seventh-day Adventists imbibe this philosophy, consciously or unconsciously.

Authoritarian administration is also associated with centralization of planning and control, and frequently with the situation where the administrator is either reluctant or unable to delegate responsibility to others. Such use of authority may be an advantage to one-man rule if the organization is small enough, but it suffers from several disadvantages. Initiative and innovation at the middle-management level is stifled because the men are not given sufficient latitude in which to operate and make decisions in their realms

of activity. Employees are little motivated to do their jobs well under authoritarian leadership. What motivation factors do exist are primarily negative—the threat of discipline or of withholding promotions and pay raises.

But this kind of authority still exists and will continue to exist. In fact, for some activities and some occasions it is a necessary and proper way to use authority. No one kind or use of authority will take care of all situations and contingencies in handling the people and facilities of an organization. Arbitrary decisions do have to be made, a certain few employees do have to be dealt with decisively. The shortness of time involved or the urgency of a situation demands an authoritarian response, quick and decisive. Let no administrator think he can maintain a high batting average of correct decisions in such situations. Good or bad, decisions have to be made by somebody with the responsibility to make them, a fact usually ignored by the critics.

President Harry Truman had a little sign on his desk that read, "The buck stops here." The administrator who can't face that fact needs to get out of administration. The informed manager of today knows, however, that authoritarian leadership cannot be the backbone of his management style day after day, but it is still there as a style to be used when the situation demands it, just the same. So when we define authority we have to recognize that authoritarianism is part of the over-all picture, although not the most important part.

The most widely accepted definition and style of authority today is more in line with the concepts of influence and acceptance on the part of those being managed. It may occasionally be referred to as the human-relations approach, authority from the bottom up, the soft-sell approach, or the motivational approach to management. The basic idea of this concept of authority is that the manager uses power very little; instead, he uses influence within his organization to accomplish objectives.

This influence will be a combination of such things as the manager's personal competence and integrity, the confidence of subordinates in his fairness and judgment, his skill of persuasion in selling his plans to others, his skill in

merging organizational objectives with employee objectives, his ability to satisfy the needs of his staff and employees, and his over-all leadership ability. Employees' acceptance of the manager's directives or instructions is the key to how much authority he really has. To expand on this idea further, we need to discuss the sources of authority.

B. *Sources of Authority.* Management receives its authority from both ends of the organizational spectrum. Since our discussion has just mentioned the acceptance idea of authority, we will look at that first.

When an employee accepts a job and a paycheck, he usually is prepared to work in a fairly broad zone of acceptance of managerial authority. In exchange for being paid, he expects to be given instructions, to follow certain orders to do jobs according to procedures explained to him, and to conform to certain regulations. He is not going to balk at management directives or refuse to follow instructions about the routine parts of his job, because he knows that his services would be terminated if he does so. Managerial authority covering this area exists because the employee accepts it. He accepts it partly because of rewards or sanctions that could be involved, but for other important reasons too. He accepts it because he recognizes its legitimacy, because he desires the approval of his peers, or because he has confidence in his superiors.¹

But let management issue an order or change a directive that enters into a zone where the employee withholds his acceptance, and you find out quickly how much authority management has or does not have. Every individual has his limits or his stopping place, beyond which he will not go in accepting managerial directives. Ask any Adventist employee of a business firm what he will do when he is asked to appear for work on Sabbath because of a special emergency at the firm. Many people of religious orientation find that their jobs sometimes are threatened because of ethical or moral considerations. Ask a man to change too much too fast, and he probably will refuse.

If an employee is faced with possible discipline that he

¹Herbert Simon, "Authority," *Research in Industrial Relations*, Harper and Brothers, 1957.

feels is unjustified, he will not accept management's authority. Let any manager try to push a new plan or program that conflicts with objectives of groups or of individual employees, and he is in serious trouble. He may have the authority to get people fired, but that authority won't get the work done. Short of sanctions management's authority ends when it has reached the limits of subordinates' or employees' zones of acceptance.

One author estimates that the normal acceptance zone of the average employee covers about 75 per cent of the relationships between employees and management with no particular problems arising. About one third of this acceptance zone can be accounted for by habitual acceptance on the part of employees, indifference, or knowledge of the premises on which necessary decisions are made.

Another third of the acceptance zone represents an area in which the employee wants to learn. He is eager to know why, and this is an area in which management can satisfy the employee by using the soft-sell approach and keeping him informed of the reasons for things.

The last third of the acceptance zone may represent an area where the employee has to be convinced. He doesn't particularly want to accept management's authority, but he is willing to listen even though he questions the wisdom of a proposal. Here is an area where hard proof, the hard-sell approach, is necessary. The better procedure, however, would be for management and subordinates to work out the problem together, broadening the zone of acceptance.

This leaves about 25 per cent of management-employee relations in the area where the employees feel that management's plans or proposals are undesirable or have unwanted consequences. It may be necessary at this point for management to employ sanctions in order to produce compliance or to do something about revising plans. Beyond this point, of course, management would run into rebellion and refusal from employees, and would be forced to change and revise decisions.²

No doubt the accuracy of these percentages as applied to

²Manley Jones, *Executive Decision Making*, R. D. Irwin, Inc., p. 130.

various parts of the zones-of-acceptance concept could be debated. It doesn't take much reflection, however, to see that there is considerable truth in the concept. From that point, all administrators should do some creative thinking about what actions they could take to broaden the zone of acceptance among their subordinates and employees. It is here that we may touch on the topic of this book—committees—expanded in later chapters. A wise administrator will allow subordinates and employees to participate in planning that affects them. This often involves assigning problems to committees. Employees frequently have more confidence in decisions coming from committees than they do from the top office, especially if they have some form of representation on such committees. The same principle applies to students in a school.

Legally, administrative authority comes from the State. All our church organizations are incorporated under the nonprofit provisions of various State laws. The States issue charters of incorporation that are the acting constitution and bylaws of the operating organizations. These bylaws spell out the functions and powers granted to these organizations, and place these powers and authority in the hands of a board of directors. The board, in turn, delegates authority to management of the organization. So in a true sense management's authority to act, to plan, to make decisions, to hire and fire, to give directions and orders, and so on, comes from the top.

Somewhat elusive is the concept that our authority in the church comes from God. God has commissioned this church to spread the gospel to the world, and the ultimate objective of every Adventist congregation, institution, and organization is to contribute to that goal. This concept of authority is difficult to define or describe, yet most administrators do feel the presence of some of this authority in their work, and most church members and employees sense a certain amount of this authority also in working for the church and its institutions. What we have done, of course, is to institutionalize this concept of authority from God. It is a type of authority that stimulates our incentives and drives and undoubtedly helps widen the zone of acceptance from workers.

It is also a type of authority easily abused if leaders think they are always right because they have dedicated themselves to God's work. To lean too much on this source of authority is a fairly common malady.

One more concept about the source of authority should be mentioned. Authority is a product of the organization within which it is exercised. It never extends beyond the limit of the association in which it is institutionalized and which gives it support and sanction. Within this environment it is both a right and a duty that is always attached to status in the organization. This status is exercised over other status relationships. An important fact in this regard is that authority is never a purely personal privilege. This point cannot be overemphasized. The person who exercises authority is an agent of the group. Insubordination, then, is a threat to the whole group.³ This principle ties in directly with the acceptance concept of authority and the employee-centered style of leadership that have been widely adopted in business firms across the United States in recent years.

C. *Delegation of Authority.* The weakest link in the handling of authority lies in how it is delegated. Perhaps no other shortcoming of administrators limits their effectiveness and circumscribes their efforts as much as inability or unwillingness to delegate authority. As mentioned early in this chapter, one-man operations are not practical except in small organizations. The only way an administrator can spread his administrative talent and facilitate the necessary activities of his organization is by delegating authority and assigning responsibility to subordinates. This is not easy to do, especially for managers who have had little management training. Many feel the weight of their responsibilities so heavily that delegating some to others comes hard.

Most people realize that even when authority is delegated and responsibility is assigned, the administrator is never excused or relieved of that responsibility. Whatever goes wrong, regardless of where responsibility was assigned, it comes back to rest on the administrator's shoul-

³ Robert Bierstedt, "The Problem of Authority," *Freedom and Control in Modern Society*, D. Van Nostrand, 1954.

ders. He is responsible to his board of directors for everything that goes on in his organization.

Admittedly, effective delegating of authority can be a hazardous balancing act. A manager must exercise control over a subordinate when he delegates authority to him, but too much control destroys the very purpose of delegation. The very act of delegation creates two obligations—the obligation to the leader of the person to whom authority is delegated, and that of the leader to those he represents. Because the one who delegates retains accountability, he must maintain some form of supervision over his subordinates. The manager cannot delegate authority with no strings attached.

There are several ways the administrator can keep his hand on the situation without applying it too heavily. Here are several:

1. Define clearly what is to be done.
2. Preview the subordinate's plan. Have him submit it orally or in writing.
3. Ask him informally at times about his progress.
4. Expect periodic reports from subordinates.
5. Set deadlines.
6. Check results.
7. Delegate by correlation. Various subordinates may work together on different phases of a plan.

Summary of a Few Management Principles

Basic principles of management have been interspersed throughout this chapter. A summary of these principles is presented here.

1. Participation by subordinates in the making of plans will usually result in better plans, because they will reflect the thinking and experience of those closest to the problems. It will also result in better coordination in carrying out plans, for those who help make a plan are interested in its success.

2. Long-term objectives are the core of the planning function of management. All other planning must fit or serve the fulfilling of those objectives.

3. The use of policies enables management better to conserve time, energy, and money by taking care of routine

matters. Policies eliminate the need of repetitive decisions.

4. The procedures by which an organization carries out its plans and objectives are influenced by employee needs and ideas. When management procedures and employee ideas are harmonized trouble is avoided. If they cannot be, management may be forced to revise some of its plans or deal authoritatively with employees.

5. Communicating with employees builds morale. Keeping employees informed leads them to be happier and more efficient and widens their zone of acceptance to authority.

6. Although authority comes from both the top and bottom in an organization, it is really the acceptance on the part of employees that determines how effectively management can use its authority.

7. Authority, to be functional, must be delegated. Authority and responsibility must be delegated together, for one without the other handicaps both manager and subordinate. Delegation of authority and responsibility, however, never relieves the administrator of accountability to his board of directors.

Although the foregoing discussions have not been designed as a complete or comprehensive coverage of stated topics, the purpose has been to lay a little groundwork for other more specialized topics relating to committees and boards. Unless both management and committee members understand basic management functions, responsibilities, and relationships, committee work will likely be less than effective. Committees will be involved in planning, and they will be related to problems of authority. Thus, if properly used, committees can be one of the most helpful tools at a leader's disposal. *And leadership needs that help!*

CHAPTER 2

Committees— When and What For?

COMMITTEES HAVE been the subject of many jokes and facetious definitions. Perhaps most of us would agree that the committee concept has earned all of them, particularly as we can look back on our experiences in committee and board meetings and remember some of our frustrations as committee members. Unquestionably the use of committees has been abused; many times committees have been a very ineffective tool. But is that the fault of the committee concept itself or of how it was used?

Committees are the acceptable agents by which we expect to conduct much of our church business. There is nothing in that statement or in Ellen G. White's writings, however, saying that all church business must be conducted by groups. The committee concept in denominational organizations is a valid one. But we need to determine whether we are getting the proper mileage out of our many and various committees. If we are using them improperly, we need to look for better ways to accomplish the objectives we seek. If we are neglecting to use committees in situations where they could be used effectively, then we aren't doing justice to our organizations.

In most instances, committee members are not in a position to know whether they should be pursuing a particular problem on a committee, but a considerable negative reaction during or after a committee session may indeed bring the message home to the pastor or manager that something isn't working out as it should be. It is up to him to know when committees should be used and when they

should not. Committees do not appoint themselves, and except in rare cases they do not assign themselves tasks to perform.

Apparently, then, some guidelines are needed as to when committees should be used and what they should be used for. Our discussion will begin with a list of situations for which committees can be an effective managerial tool, followed by a discussion of situations for which committees have proved not to be an advantage.

When to Use Committees

A. *For Important or Major Decisions.* People do not trust one person to make major decisions that will affect their lives. The President of the United States occasionally has the awesome responsibility to make major decisions affecting the lives of millions of people. Many dispute the right or power of the President to make such decisions, but most realize that scores if not hundreds of man-hours of committee work have provided the background for his decisions.

The question arises in any organization—church, school, conference, or institution—whether one person has the knowledge of all the facts, the depth of perception, the judgment, the skill, to make important decisions by himself. Laymen in the church and subordinates in our institutions would be more satisfied if they knew that a number of responsible and capable people were involved in contributing their ideas and influence to the making of such major decisions.

For these same reasons the leader* himself should avoid the lonely role when help is available and he is not forced to make major decisions alone for reasons beyond his control. He needs this help and has no reason whatever to feel that accepting a group approach to major decisions lowers his status in the organization. He is still the leader, and is raising the status of the group by giving it participation in the decision-making process.

* "Leader" is used throughout to cover all positions where management skills are exercised and committee work is appropriate, such as department heads ranging from local churches to large institutions, presidents of conferences and colleges, principals of academies, managers, administrators, and their middle-management teams.

Such participation is in itself a powerful motivational device. The leader also needs to recognize that the people in his organization will have greater confidence in group decisions and will tend to accept them more readily than they will one-man decisions. It is the old principle of participation and the common belief that two heads are better than one. The more important the decision, the more zealously leadership should seek help in making it.

Should the pastor of a church decide by himself that a new church should be built, begin laying plans, and inform each member of the church how much he is expected to contribute? Should the conference president make the decision? Obviously not. Decisions to add a new wing onto the hospital, to change the general education requirements at the college, to begin a new TV evangelism program, or to drop a long-standing publication of wide distribution are all examples of important decisions that are properly made by appropriate committees. On more than one occasion church finance committees have been appointed because the pastor showed lack of judgment in spending the church expense budget. How much better it would have been for the pastor to ask for the formation of a finance committee to share the decisions and the responsibility. Acceptance instead of criticism would have been the result.

The leader is not giving up his authority in applying group judgment to major decisions. Just the opposite, he is increasing the use of authority, which, after all, is to get things done effectively. (See chapter 1.)

B. *Where Group Judgment Is Needed.* There is an overlap, of course, between this section and Section A above, but its significance suggests that it deserves further discussion.

Leaders today do not need to feel inferior or insecure because they do not know more about all the operations in their organization than subordinates and employees do. No one expects them to. This is an age of specialization, and leaders today are intentionally surrounding themselves with competent people who are specialists in their fields. A leader himself is a specialist, organizing and directing the work of other specialists. Treasurers who did not finish college are willing to hire young men with Master's degrees. Conference

presidents who went directly into the work after college are investing conference money in young men to finish seminary programs. Such men are not afraid of change nor made insecure by surrounding themselves with men and women who are getting better training than they had. The days we live in and the needs of our time demand that they do this.

The head of an organization cannot hope to have all the information, skill, knowledge, and insight he needs for making decisions. Instead, he employs the group judgment technique. It makes available to him all the specialized knowledge in his organization that he can bring to bear on a particular problem. And invariably, the stimulation and cross fertilization of ideas that come from a group are superior to one man's concepts and outlook. What one person does not think of someone else does.

One member of a particular committee on which I served for several years was a professor from a different department. Almost always the two of us would be at opposite poles with our ideas. The solution was usually somewhere in the middle. But I developed a great deal of respect for him through these meetings. I never came away from one without feeling that I had had my insights to a problem enlarged beyond my own area of knowledge and ideas because of this man's contribution to the committee.

We each look at problems differently because our backgrounds, home life, education, and training have left indelible and completely different impressions on us. We naturally approach problems differently and see different relationships, different consequences, and different solutions. Why shouldn't leadership draw from this wealth of talent and ideas?

In most cases, the result of group judgment and group experience applied to a problem is superior to one person's judgment. There will be occasional exceptions to this, as will be noted a little later, but the weight of experience points to the effectiveness of group judgment a large percentage of the time.

C. *When Coordination Is Important.* Whenever there is a need to coordinate the activities of several departments, divisions, offices, or groups, the committee meeting is an

excellent device for developing integrated procedures. The pastor or administrator who tries to settle coordination problems of an over-all plan by consulting with the head of each department will find it a frustrating experience. And why should he do all that work? By chairing a coordinating committee or delegating the chairmanship to someone else, he will make it possible for department heads who meet together to do the work themselves and be more highly motivated in the doing of it. All they need is a good chairman to keep order and organize the proceedings.

Suppose, for example, the manager of the wood products or furniture industry on a school campus sees the need for a new item in the product line and that for an effective sales effort it needs to be ready by a certain date. Think of the things that have to be coordinated. Specifications have to be drawn up, supplies have to be ordered; assembly procedures have to be laid out and coordinated with other product lines so that production will not be jammed up; perhaps new employees will have to be hired and trained; financing of supply inventories and finished-goods storage need to be cared for; and salesmen have to be prepared to push the new line at trade shows and to prospective customers. All these activities have to be dovetailed so that certain steps will not interfere with other steps; timing and priorities have to be worked out. The committee is the perfect vehicle for doing this kind of work.

Such a plan as this will not operate like clockwork from the first step to the last. Problems always arise, partly because many things are not under the organization's control. Supplies are delayed, a truckers' strike occurs, a machine breaks down, a key man is lost, or market conditions change. Again, the coordinating committee is the right place to work out the solutions, because these problems affect everybody involved in carrying out the various phases of the plan.

Illustrations that show the need for coordination are legion. They might include the planning of camp meeting, a seminar for workers, an evangelistic campaign, the instituting of a new service at a hospital, or the construction of a major building. For all of these, and many more, the committee is the proper tool.

D. *As a Sounding Board for Ideas and Decisions.* Many leaders have saved themselves from taking an unwise step by first sounding out their ideas on a committee. Generally if a leader can successfully defend an idea or a decision before a committee, he will be able to carry it out in his organization. A committee can be merciless to a new idea. Yet the members' analysis can be useful. If his bright, shiny new idea falls on its face before the scrutiny and questioning of a committee, it could be a disaster if put into effect with the employees. Committees are particularly adept at tearing an idea apart and examining it carefully from every angle. Committee members generally form a wide enough representation of ideas, biases, and viewpoints to think of many relationships and consequences that do not occur to the leader who created the idea.

The objects of a person's own creativity look good to him and he is not as capable of subjecting his ideas to critical analysis as others are. So if others judge an idea or project to be impractical or unwise, it behooves the intelligent leader either to scuttle his idea or to take it back to the drawing board for revision. On the other hand, an idea that does stand the test of an impartial critical analysis by a committee may be ready for the next step—a tryout.

Sometimes committees serve as a proper vehicle for disseminating information. A decision has been made that may be unpopular, even though necessary. Or maybe a decision has been made which wrong information, rumor, or general griping could turn into a serious problem in the organization. Certain kinds of information are inappropriate on the bulletin board or in the organization's employee newspaper. In these situations, giving an explanation of a decision together with the facts surrounding it to appropriate committees can be a useful tactic. Key people are informed. Many others will accept the decision when they know all the facts, and those who do not agree will more likely tolerate it. These influential people then display a constructive attitude as word of the decision filters down through the organization. The result that leadership desired is accomplished, whereas a public statement or announcement might produce negative results. Trying out an idea on a committee has the added

advantage of giving leadership a preview of what it can expect in reaction to the idea or decision throughout the organization.

E. *For Training Subordinates.* One of the best training grounds for the prospective leader is the give and take of committee work. All administrators have the responsibility of training subordinates, and giving committee assignments is one way of doing so. The trainee needs to get experience not only as a member of committees but also as a chairman.

One of the most valuable lessons we can learn in committee work is how our job is related to the work of other people. We go to school, study our specialties, learn how to do our chosen work professionally, and come out eager to contribute our knowledge and talents to the Lord's work. We start out somewhere on one of the lower rungs of the ladder. Somebody else does most of the coordinating with other groups or departments. Our first contributions are largely to the effective operation of the smaller environment where we are assigned.

As promotions come, the little world of the man going up the ladder expands rapidly. It becomes a world of interrelationships where departments are affected by the activities of other departments, and what one decision maker does affects and is affected by what other decision makers do. Some activities and plans are more important than others; scheduling, timing, priorities, and so on help determine what the middle manager or maturing leader does and how he does it.

The middle manager needs the give and take of ideas among his colleagues. He needs to learn how to support other people in developing plans, how to recognize when his own area of responsibility may be threatened by someone else's plan, and how to defend his area of responsibility. He also needs to learn to deal with different personalities. Some people have much stronger and forceful personalities than others have. If other people walk on him because they have stronger personalities than he has, he needs to learn how to deal with his problem. If he tries to ride roughshod over others, he soon learns that they are ready to further his education about working with people. You couldn't find a

better training ground to carry out the administrative responsibility of grooming subordinates than in the rough and tumble workshop of committees.

Here is where the new supervisor, department head, or lay leader can first learn to work and plan with others, where he can see the over-all picture and learn to adjust his thinking beyond the horizons of his own sphere of activity. He can get the vision of how he fits in and how what he does contributes to the goals or objectives of the entire organization. Until he absorbs this bit of education well and learns these valuable lessons, he will not be ready for larger responsibilities. Later, as a chairman of committees of his own, he is ready to be the coordinator, peacemaker, and leader of wisdom himself.

F. *To Obtain Continuity of Planning and Policy.* Administrative personnel change; membership on standing committees changes over the years. Fortunately, a large number of key people do not all leave at the same time. Most organizations could not stand a complete turnover without major breakdowns in operations. The changeover of a whole leadership team means loss of continuity in the planning processes and quite likely breakdown of standing policies.

One of the legitimate ways of maintaining continuity in an organization is through its standing committees. If membership on these committees is rotated correctly, these changes will not disrupt the organization. Membership on standing committees or boards should be set up so that the terms of service are staggered. For example, if members of a particular committee are appointed for three-year terms of service, the appointments should be set up so that about one third of the terms expire each year. One third of the committee will then be new people each year and two thirds of them will be veterans. Whenever possible, the seasoned members on the committee should outnumber the newcomers.

In this way the thinking, planning activities, and policies of an organization will be maintained without major upsets. New members may bring in fresh ideas and new thinking, but the accomplishments of the past and the successful pathways that have been established will be continued. By the time the term of some of the veterans on the committee

expires, the newcomers are indoctrinated and play their proper role in providing legitimate continuity to the organization. Such continuity is vital. Changes in plans and policies will come, as indeed they should, but change will be gradual rather than abrupt. It is rare that abrupt changes in long-term plans, objectives, and policies are in the best interest of the organization.

G. *For Passing Judgment on Individual Progress.* The stickiest decisions that management has to make are those involving personnel. Most decisions regarding machines, buildings, finances, inventories, and the like, can be made with a high degree of objectivity. But being objective about people is quite another matter, because almost always personnel problems contain subjective elements. Where a value judgment has to be made about the performance of another person, it is a good rule that this judgment never be made by one person alone.

Whether a group having the responsibility of judging individual performance actually meets together as a committee or judges separately and reports their individual judgments to some administrator or coordinator is not overly important. What is important is that a person's qualifications for promotion and appointment, on one hand; or being passed over, demoted, disciplined, or dismissed, on the other, should never have to rest on the biases, personal feelings, and judgment of a single person. Too many errors can be made, or one person can be at the mercy of another.

All of us have probably had the experience of seeing some person who would not have been our choice turn out to be a strong leader. And we probably have pushed hard at some time or other to gain a promotion for someone who turned out to be a round peg in a square hole. Group judgment is vital in passing such judgments on others, and here again, a committee can be a valuable tool for the purpose.

When Not to Use Committees

A. *When Cost Is Important.* For purposes of illustration, suppose you wish to call together a committee of ten people for about an hour to work on a problem. We will further assume, for illustration, that each of these ten persons is sala-

ried at an average of \$10,000 a year. This means that the one-hour committee meeting will cost the organization \$5 per person involved, or \$50, not considering the chairman's time, other work that didn't get done, and incidental considerations.

Now let us expand the illustration a little. You are calling these same men together for a monthly meeting to last from 1:00 P.M. to 5:00 P.M. and from 7:00 P.M. until 9:00 P.M. Each of the ten men will have to drive an average of 100 miles, starting in the morning, staying overnight, and going back to his office the next morning. Now the costs might look something like this:

| | |
|--|----------|
| One and one-half days' time—10 men | \$600.00 |
| 10 men—100 miles \$.07, each way | 140.00 |
| Per diem—10 men, 1 1/2 days \$6 per day | 90.00 |
| Overnight lodging \$15.00 | 150.00 |
| | <hr/> |
| Total | \$980.00 |

This illustration includes salary costs that continue whether the committee members are attending a meeting or doing something else. This amount may not represent an immediate cash outlay, but it does represent the value of other work that is not being accomplished while these people are in committee meetings. It is clear that at least \$380 of the costs listed here are actually extra cash outlay.

Make up your own illustrations where your men have to come in by plane and stay for several days. It will impress you that committee meetings and board meetings are expensive and should not be called on the spur of the moment or for anything but important matters. Perhaps meetings can be called for multiple purposes and the cost be held down. Every dollar spent in committee meetings is a dollar that is not available to the organization for other uses.

B. *Where the Decision Is Not a Highly Important One.* Much committee-meeting time is spent with trivia. Leaders cannot afford to waste the time of a group to make intermediate and lesser decisions that they and their associates should make. Someone once said that committees swat flies

as though they were lions and swat lions as though they were flies. Unfortunately, there is a tendency for committees to spend time and effort on problems in inverse proportion to the importance of the problem.

The principle that God's work should function primarily through group judgment is a concept that is easily abused. If this principle were carried to the extreme, we wouldn't have administrators at all. Every organization would be run completely by committees. We must remember that managers have the right to manage and that administrators are chosen to give leadership to our organizations. In important matters, group judgment should be and must be sought. But in anything but important matters, committees are in the way and everybody's efforts are being wasted.

For example, let a committee set policies, but once set, the committee doesn't have to be called every time that policy is applied to situations or even to the times when the policy needs to be interpreted. Only if an administrator is habitually misinterpreting a policy or a policy is so vague as to be unworkable does it need to be taken up again by a committee.

A good administrator will learn not to lean on a committee when it is not necessary and to exercise his own managerial prerogatives when it is appropriate to do so. Sometimes administrators pass their problems on to committees to escape their rightful responsibility, but such action will only backfire and decrease their influence in the organization. Committees are important for major decisions but not minor ones.

C. *Where Speed Is Vital.* The democratic process generally grinds things out slowly and deliberately, seldom with dispatch. Any committee worth its salt operates democratically or there is not much point in having it. It follows that if a quick decision is necessary, leadership will have to make it; the committee is not a proper tool for the occasion.

There are many situations in every organization that demand quick action. Emergencies arise and must be dealt with on the spot. Special opportunities present themselves and need to be taken advantage of immediately, before delay makes it impossible to do so. Deadlines occur for

presenting plans and reports that do not permit the time it would take to work through a committee. I am certainly no promoter of "crises management," but crises do occur with a certain amount of unwanted regularity and usually have to be met quickly and decisively.

When speed is vital, even in major problems sometimes, the responsibility must be shouldered by the leader. A committee is of little use when time is a major factor.

D. *When the Problem Is One of Execution Rather Than Decision.* It should be clearly understood that a committee acting as a whole cannot do anything beyond discussing a plan, solving a problem, or making a decision. The committee cannot carry out a plan or put a decision into execution. Only some person representing the committee can do that. This might be the chairman of the committee, or it might be an administrator who has asked the committee for a decision concerning a problem and then puts the decision in motion himself. In some cases it may also be that the committee has authority to delegate the execution of a plan or a decision to someone to carry out. But the committee itself cannot execute and no leader should expect it to.

A committee can coordinate a plan. Multiple plans often are devised by committees, the various parts assigned to individuals or departments, a series of steps set up, deadlines established, and the plan set in motion by administrative direction. The same committee may still function as a clearinghouse for working out problems and coordinating the work in an advisory capacity. However, it is not often that such a function is assigned to a committee. It is more frequently handled administratively.

The leader who expects a committee to make a decision and also to carry it out is not only passing the buck but expecting something of a committee that it is not equipped for. Groups do not execute a decision; individuals do.

E. *When Qualified Personnel Are Not Available.* Occasionally a leader is either so dedicated to the committee concept or so unsure of himself that he goes ahead with a committee meeting no matter what the circumstances. If a committee is composed of department heads or if membership of committees is by position, then obviously the leader seldom is in a

position where qualified people are not accessible. But there are situations in which a committee is extremely useful to a leader in solving a technical problem, but the technical people are not available. In that case, he can only gather what facts and information he can acquire from outside sources and make the best educated estimate he is capable of. He won't be the first leader who has had to do that. And it won't do him much good to call together a group of unqualified people to hold a committee meeting over the problem. He might just as well save everybody's time and the organization's money by making the decision himself. In fact, the decision probably will be a better one if it comes from him rather than from an unqualified group.

F. *Where Divided Responsibility and Compromise Action Need to Be Avoided.* Of all the criticisms leveled at committees, the accusation of compromise can be one of the most valid and most serious. Most committee decisions are compromises to some degree, but every leader knows that there are times when a compromise is not an acceptable solution. In fact, a compromise may only further aggravate a problem.

I well remember a situation that arose on a college-curriculum committee in which a certain change in graduation requirements was proposed. It soon became obvious that the committee was composed of people who were determined to protect vested interests. Some were for the change; others were not. The result was a compromise suggestion that nobody liked but most were willing to vote for because it still left their positions unaltered and got the item off the agenda. But in practice it turned out to be a foolish change, one that students openly ridiculed. In this situation the compromise was worse than either alternative—making no change or putting the proposal into effect as it originally was submitted.

On another occasion the scholastic performance of a student had to be reviewed by a small committee. Three of the four on the committee were perfectly satisfied in their minds that nothing more could be done to save the situation for the student. One member of the committee argued long and hard for the student's cause. More to keep peace on the committee than for any other reason, the other members

compromised their positions to allow the student to continue. The result was a disaster. Teachers were tied up dozens of hours in private tutoring, more compromises had to be made, and the student, who actually did complete his program under those conditions, is no credit to his school today. Does the story sound like a meeting of the church board to discuss dropping the name of a wayward brother or sister?

In a sense, compromises are a necessary evil. Without compromises we would find ourselves either going to unwarranted extremes or being hung up without being able to make decisions because of the inability of all to agree. The leader needs to recognize that compromise is a mixed blessing and that under certain circumstances it is a better tactic to make a decision himself than to risk an undesirable compromise.

Another way of tarnishing the results of a committee's work is for the attitude to prevail that nobody on the committee is responsible for what the committee accomplishes. Group responsibility has a tendency to become nobody's responsibility.

This can be the fault of the chairman of the committee in the kind of leadership he gives. If he acts disinterested or unresponsive to the needs of a situation, the committee members are likely to do the same.

The administrator may be at fault also. If it becomes known that he is shoving a problem onto a committee rather than facing it himself, the committee can hardly be expected to generate much enthusiasm for the project. If the problem itself seems to lack relevance or importance, the result can be the same.

In assigning tasks to committees, administrators must also define carefully what it is that the committee is to accomplish. Fuzzy assignments will leave a committee in the position of not knowing what its responsibilities are. A committee that is not meeting its responsibilities, regardless of whose fault it is, might as well be disbanded. The results coming out of it will not be of use to the organization anyway, and chances are that over-all morale will suffer. No committee, in that case, is better than a poor committee.

Concluding Thoughts

Estill Green in an article appearing in *Advanced Management* summarized a study that had been made by industry concerning the use of committees.¹ What industry found to be true will not be one hundred per cent true for church organizations, but the results are interesting and relevant enough to reflect on.

| <i>Committee Uses</i> | <i>Result Ratings</i> |
|--|-----------------------|
| 1. For making operational decisions. | Poor |
| 2. For facilitating acceptance. | Fair |
| 3. For implementing decisions. | Poor |
| 4. For advising management. | Excellent |
| 5. For implementing creative technology. | Fair to poor |
| 6. For unifying points of view. | Good |
| 7. For educating personnel. | Fair |
| 8. For offering training. | Fair |

Cyril O'Donnell, a writer on management topics, states that the proper use of committees is based on two important assumptions: (1) That the structure of an organization and its activities conform to the principles of good organization, and (2) that the enterprise has effective leaders.² Committees cannot effectively support mediocre management; they are most effective when they can do a better job than a good leader can do by himself.

¹Estill I. Green, "The Nature and Use of Committees," *Advanced Management*, July, 1959.

²Cyril O'Donnell, "Ground Rules for Using Committees," *Management Review*, October, 1961.

CHAPTER 3

Conducting Committee Meetings

PEOPLE PLANNING committee meetings will find help in Robert H. Pierson's book *So You Want to Be a Leader*.^{*} In chapter seven Elder Pierson discusses some aspects of being a committee chairman and gives down-to-earth suggestions for chairmen of committees in denominational organizations and institutions. The following material undoubtedly will overlap Elder Pierson's thoughts on the subject to some extent; however, in the main his book is concerned with the spiritual aspects of leadership. This book is more concerned with the mechanical and managerial aspects.

No attempt is going to be made in this chapter to discuss *Robert's Rules of Order*. Of course committee and board meetings must be conducted with some degree of order. Small groups can work successfully with a minimum of formality, but larger groups must follow procedural rules in order to accomplish anything. The chairman must remain in control of large groups, with members speaking only when recognized by him. Small groups may arrive at a consensus fairly easily, but large groups need the vehicle of motions, seconding, and voting to conclude discussions and state decisions. Probably few committees follow *Robert's Rules of Order* meticulously, but the chairman has to decide how closely formality is followed. The size of the group, the nature of the agenda or problem, and the time available are the variables that determine the need for procedural rules.

^{*} Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1966.

The Chairman's Leadership

There can be only one leader or chairman of a committee. If the chairman does not exert that leadership, more than likely someone else will in an informal manner. This does not mean that the chairman must be forceful and domineering to be a success, but if he does not maintain control over the committee, it will not make much progress. It is the chairman who keeps everybody from talking at once, who must determine that a discussion has not yet been represented by all points of view, and when the discussion should be closed. It is the chairman's responsibility to see that the agenda is covered, that the work of the committee is guided, and that it achieves its particular objective.

This is not the place for a thorough discussion of leadership styles, but a few comments are appropriate. Basically, there are three major leadership styles: (1) autocratic, (2) employee-centered, and (3) democratic.

Autocratic leadership is based on the old authoritarian school of management philosophy that management should do the thinking, give the orders, and closely control activities through personal supervision. Employee-centered leadership has more of the concept that the leader is the representative of the group and carries out what the group wants done. He fulfills the wishes of the group and exerts what initiative the group desires him to have. Democratic leadership is more of a middle ground. The leader takes initiative on his own, but he is also receptive to the group. He leads but does not dominate. He sees to it that everybody in the group receives fair treatment and is encouraged to take part, yet he remains capable of making decisions.

For years textbook writers attempted to define leadership as a set of necessary qualifications. The reader usually would become confused by finding that authors could not agree. In more recent years management specialists have come to realize that leadership is a situational thing and that different situations demand different leadership styles and qualifications.

To a point, of course, this is also true of committee leadership. On occasion, authoritarian leadership may be necessary, but these occasions should be few and far between. An

authoritarian chairman may be using the committee only to give his decisions the appearance of group approval and sanction. He knows he cannot successfully hand down a decision or action without going through a committee. The honesty of that kind of action is certainly questionable, and that kind of chairman, if this is his main leadership style, is likely to be moving fairly often, at high cost to the organizations who make out his paycheck and stand the moving expenses. However, if a committee is hopelessly deadlocked or delaying making a decision, forceful leadership by a chairman may be necessary.

Where committees are small, say three-man committees, the employee-centered style of leadership may be both appropriate and effective. A small group working closely together needs little formal leadership, only occasional guidance. It is fitting in such situations for the chairman to function as a good reflector of the group's thinking and to carry out what the group wants done.

The democratic leadership style has by far the most application to committee work. It is a better middle ground for most committees, giving necessary authority and leadership to the chairman to control the meetings, but also providing an open democratic atmosphere for committee members to express their views and vote their convictions.

One of the essential areas in which a chairman can and should show his leadership is how he plans for and conducts meetings. He has ample opportunity for creative and innovative thinking here: the items chosen for the agenda, the wording of the items, the order of the items, and the way questions are raised. If discussion threatens to bog down, a good chairman throws in questions to keep it moving. He can stimulate members to express ideas that help analyze and answer problems raised. These questions can be thought up beforehand and jotted down for use at appropriate moments. It is much easier in the preparation stage to think up questions that need to be raised than while discussion is going on.

The chairman also has to plan carefully for the use of time during the meeting. It is his responsibility to use time effectively and to see to it that the committee's task or objec-

tive is carried out. If the discussion wanders off onto sidelines, it is the chairman's job to pull it back on the track. If he sees that not all the items on an agenda can be completed in the time available, he has to decide which items have priority and which have to be postponed. If a committee is dragging its feet in coming to a conclusion, he may be able to focus the members' thoughts by summarizing the previous discussion and the major points of view expressed. This is the way he maintains the leadership role during the meeting. Granting the floor to individuals is perfunctory. Here he needs only to be careful that certain individuals are not allowed to monopolize the discussion while others are squeezed out.

In line with democratic leadership style, a chairman must avoid dominating a committee meeting. A man may be so convinced of his own ideas or conclusions that he is determined to sell them to his committee. Or he may be a stronger personality than other committee members, who consequently shy away from expressing themselves or from finding themselves in a debate with a chairman. If a member thinks his ideas are going to be downgraded or ridiculed, he probably remains silent. It is the responsibility of the chairman to create an atmosphere of freedom of thought and expression before and during committee meetings so that no person feels under pressure or containment. It is also necessary, as previously mentioned, that the chairman not allow anyone to dominate the committee by the volume of his contribution or by the manner in which he might try to bring pressure on other members. Flexibility needs to be the chairman's constant guide as he handles the proceedings.

Participation by Members

No doubt there are places where silence is golden, but not on a committee. A committee member who sits through a meeting without saying something to aid the discussion is a useless committee member. The committee meeting is the place to exchange ideas, to create new ones, to hammer ideas into solutions, or to set a course of action. Full and open participation should be expected of everyone present.

On one occasion a committee chairman came to me for

counsel on choosing some members for a committee. Among those previously suggested was a man of many years' experience who was widely known for his ability to give forth his ideas in abundance and to promote and defend them loud and long. Other proposed members for this committee consisted of younger men with little experience who did not have the same kind of personality. The chairman wanted the fresh, new ideas the younger men could contribute to the discussions, but under the circumstances full and open participation from these younger men would have been next to impossible. When this fact was pointed out, the chairman wisely looked for better balance on the committee.

A good chairman may go out of his way to promote full and open participation, but the individual committee member must be the one to accept the responsibility for taking part in the proceedings. Preparation for the discussions will ensure his readiness to participate, but this measure does not fill the place of having an active mind during the meeting too. Each man has a wealth of background, training, and experience to apply to the matter under discussion, and each man must feel the responsibility to give the benefit of this knowledge and experience to the group.

There are those who talk a great deal at committee meetings and say virtually nothing. They might call much talking participation, but few others would. Participation assumes the making of a worth-while contribution to the discussion. If a person uses his knowledge and experience, particularly when backed up by some preparation for the meeting, he makes a creditable contribution.

Not often will the contribution of a single person result in an adopted solution, but when it is thrown into the mixture of ideas submitted by others, it contributes its share to the solution. An individual may feel that none of his suggestions were used, but there is no reason to feel that way. His ideas undoubtedly stimulated ideas from others or challenged others to think up proposals to counter his. This indirect way of contributing to a committee is valuable, for this give and take is the stuff decisions are made of. Each person in the group can help the rest of the members see the situation from different points of view. If the individual

gives this help, regardless of whether his own idea was adopted, he has made a good contribution and can take as much credit for the final product of the committee's work as anyone else can.

It is the duty of each committee member to express his convictions. Saying what we think others want to hear is no contribution, nor is it an honest contribution. Only through our convictions can we persuade others to consider our point of view. We need to speak our convictions and to vote our convictions in committee meetings, not for the purpose of being obstinate but for the purpose of making an honest contribution to the problem. Be sure of this: unless you are a yes man, you will wind up on the short end of a vote from time to time. But you will be respected for voting your convictions rather than compromising them. After the vote is taken, the situation is different. Even if you lose, you have the responsibility of defending the majority opinion and relegating your own opinions to a back seat. (See chapter 7.)

Open-mindedness is a necessary virtue in committee meetings. Too many people seem to think that communication is the art of seeing to it that other people are persuaded to acknowledge their point of view. With everything that has been said here about participation, it would be a mistake to say nothing about the art of listening. Obviously, each member of a committee is going to be spending more time listening than talking, but if he is doing his part correctly by listening attentively and intelligently, listening becomes part of participation.

We must go to committee meetings prepared not only to persuade but to be persuaded. Our own ideas often take on new meanings and relationships, even to ourselves, when they are mingled with other people's ideas and points of view. Perhaps a few people come out of committee meetings with the same set of ideas they went in with, but not many do. The give and take of committee work is just that—some of both for everybody who takes part. One of the most worth-while contributions we may make to a committee is to maintain an attitude of flexibility in what we think about the problem at hand.

There is one particular failing of committee members

that deserves special mention, a failing that is too often seen in committees of denominational organizations. We are too sensitive. One of the things we seem to have great difficulty in learning but which is important to effective committee work is the art of criticizing and analyzing an idea without criticizing the person who contributed it. Or we are so thin skinned we feel that when someone is criticizing our idea he is criticizing us.

This concept is unprofessional. An idea or a proposed solution to a problem must be submitted to analysis; it deserves to be criticized from every angle before we dare commit an organization's funds and people's talents to its adoption. There should never be anything personal involved in criticizing ideas, either on the part of the criticizer or the author of the idea. Christian brotherhood and professional ethics reject any such intentional behavior. Once in the hopper, ideas are the property of the committee, not of the individual.

The give and take of committee discussion cannot stand up under personal feelings if people feel threatened when their ideas are put under the conversational microscope for thorough inspection. If the idea is not a good one it needs to be torn apart and rejected. If it is good it will stand up under criticism. This is not a vicious pastime designed to delight malcontents. Committees do not criticize ideas for personal reasons. The solution hammered out in committees will be the basis of the organization's action, and may represent the spending of large sums of money or greatly affect the personnel of the institution. Every committee member must cultivate an attitude of objectivity that keeps his personal feelings from so tangling with his ideas that they are inadvertently stepped on by other people who are trying to be objective. If we can develop this type of objectivity, we can get rid of unnecessary sensitivity in discussing ideas in groups.

Some Effective Methods

In addition to the comments just made concerning the chairman of a committee and the individual participation of members, there are several tactics or methods that can be

used effectively in particular circumstances. A few thoughts on them will be included as a conclusion to this chapter.

A. *Brainstorming.* There are situations where a single idea is needed to start a plan in motion, such as a name, title, key phrase, slogan, a new product, or a special way of doing something. One way of generating ideas is commonly called brainstorming.

In this method of thinking up ideas, a group or a committee directs its whole attention to coming up with a single acceptable idea. Everyone in the group says anything that comes to mind, and a secretary writes down every suggestion. It makes no difference whether the idea expressed seems relevant. The method is to allow everybody in the group to let his mind work on the idea without inhibitions or restrictions and without fear of rejection. The list may get long, but so much the better. Among the suggestions usually is a combination of ideas that meets the group's objectives.

Industry has used this device often with favorable results. The list, of course, will contain dozens of useless ideas, but the environment of brainstorming is conducive to the generating of ideas or combinations of ideas, some of which may be useful.

B. *Subdividing Committees.* When a committee is responsible for a rather large project and the committee itself is large, the forming of subcommittees is a particularly useful approach. The problem or project can be broken down into parts and assigned to these subcommittees. These smaller groups are nearly always more efficient in coming to grips quickly with a problem than a larger group can be.

The common practice is for the subcommittees to work on their individual parts of the project for a set period of time and then for the whole committee to meet as a unit. In this meeting subcommittee reports are discussed, questioned, and accepted or sent back for modification. This way, the large committee coordinates the parts of the project so that the final plan will fit together smoothly.

Boards of directors, as well as committees, have found this to be an effective method of operation. In some cases subgroups may not be asked to work on parts of a single project. They may rather attack altogether different prob-

lems unrelated to the assignments given other subgroups.

C. *The Timing of Meetings.* There is much to be said for having committee meetings at eight o'clock in the morning. Minds are more open to creative ideas, and they have not been bogged down yet with the pressing problems of the day. Many organizations schedule their meetings at this time of day as a standard practice.

Some writers suggest that all committee meetings should be scheduled at 11:00 A.M. and 4:00 P.M. because these are the only times of the day when people will apply themselves to get something done promptly so as not to run over the noon hour or quitting time. There is something to it. I have often observed committees wrangle over issues, but when quitting time approaches, items on an agenda are handled with dispatch. Arguing thins out, motions get made, and items are voted on. There are times when this element of human nature probably should be utilized and other times when it should not.

Committee meetings are often scheduled for the evening hours so that they will not interfere with routine or necessary work. Interruptions are minimal, and the committee can give its full attention to the matter at hand without members' being fidgety about getting back to their desks, where work pressure is building. Where evening meetings are agreeable with the group, this time is fine. There is always a certain amount of imposition involved, however, in asking people to put in overtime hours and to sacrifice time away from their homes and families.

D. *Keeping Objectives in Mind.* Care must be exercised to keep the committee from getting off the track and diverted from its goal. Conversations ramble, people like to talk about their special interests, or the group may not always understand its objectives clearly. At times the group may know its own objective but not be aware of the over-all objective of which the committee's work is only a part. Basically, it is the chairman's responsibility to keep the objective before the members at all times and to keep them moving in that direction. He should inform his committee of this objective, and the members should be willing to cooperate with the chairman's efforts to keep the group aimed toward its goals.

E. *Problem-solving Methods.* The logical method of solving problems is considered of sufficient importance to devote a chapter to the topic. (See chapter 6.) It should be obvious, especially to those who have served on a few committees, that approaching a problem without a plan of attack usually results in a great deal of wasted time and effort, and frequently does not result in the best solution that could have been found by the group.

CHAPTER 4

Preparation for Committee Meetings

IN ALL the literature that exists concerning committee and board meetings, no topic has been ignored more than preparation for meetings. On the part of the thousands of people who participate in such meetings, no aspect has been so greatly neglected as the preparation they make for their committee work. People leave their offices, close their doors on pressing work, perhaps drive for hours or catch a plane to travel a thousand miles to attend hours upon hours of meetings in which they are expected to participate, without having spent five minutes in preparation.

The man-hours wasted and the contributions that are not made as a result of lack of preparation are appalling. The waste involved comes close to compromising the members' integrity to the organizations they serve. Both chairmen and committeemen are guilty of this neglect. As a group, chairmen are undoubtedly forced to make more preparation than others do, but neglect on the part of both is costly in time, effort, and money. A few guidelines in this area, if followed, can greatly enhance the efficiency of committee operation and cut down on the time and expense for all concerned.

Planning by the Chairman

A well-conducted committee meeting takes time to plan. The chairman must remember that he is using the organization's budget and the man-hours of busy people. If study materials are going to be needed, they should be prepared, duplicated, and distributed ahead of time. If the chairman

has a well-thought-out plan, it will be quickly recognized by the members of the committee, who will be respectfully grateful to him for conserving their time and energy.

One committee of which I was a member met regularly once a week for about two hours. Week after week the chairman appeared with no agenda and no plan of attack, no objective except to get through a pile of papers that seemed to get higher each week instead of lower. Needless to say, the committee did not accomplish much because no one planned to accomplish much. The committee jumped helter-skelter from topic to topic as the items came off the top of the pile of unsorted papers.

It is not often that committees complete their work in one easy meeting. If such were possible one might question the need for a committee in the first place. Frequently the work of a committee will extend over a period of time and require a series of meetings in connection with studying a problem or achieving a set objective.

Several years ago I was asked to chair a committee to solve a particular accreditation problem in a school. A little investigation revealed a set of events related to the work of the committee and the eventual target date for the full accreditation report. Working from this information, we saw how our work could fit into its proper place in the series of events. Working backward from the target date, we established a deadline for completing our work.

In this case, the committee had eighteen months in which to complete its work. The next step was to find out what meeting time would best suit the members of the committee and how much time they could allow themselves to work on the project assigned to the committee. Quite a few hours were involved in studying the task to be accomplished, breaking it down into subtopics, and estimating the time required to complete various steps of the problem. Allowances had to be made for unforeseen difficulties, so that flexibility could be built into the plan for the committee to follow. From this point, assignments were made or goals set for each meeting the committee had over the entire period. By agreement the committee disciplined itself to follow the plan, and a tremendous load of work was handled. The

deadline was met so that other related parts of the program could be carried out and the target date reached with the desired objective accomplished. The point is that a problem can be broken down into parts and these parts can be planned to fit the schedule available to a committee.

Often a committee will have to consider a whole group of smaller problems rather than one large problem. In this case, the chairman has the responsibility to make up an agenda of items to be discussed. Two things need to be decided at this point—whether items are important enough to be included on the agenda and in what order they should appear.

If an item is not of great importance, it is better to leave the decision to be made by an individual who is at the level in the chain of the organization where the problem exists rather than to take the time of the committee for it. Items that require group judgment are best reserved for the committee. Then follows the priority or order in which items should be taken up. It is often good strategy to plan the easier items first. The committee gets the feel of working together, of accomplishing something, and of making progress. It can then warm up to the more difficult items with confidence in its ability to work together as a group in tackling problems. By this time, the exchange of ideas among the committee members will be freer and franker. A good chairman takes these considerations into account before the committee ever meets.

The chairman should not be afraid to plan deadlines for his committee. Placing a little flexibility into the deadlines will make them realistic, so that there will not be the temptation to ignore them because of frustration at the impossibility of meeting them. Deadlines provide incentives, standards to work by, and a time limit on goals and subgoals that help a committee accomplish its work. Working against a realistic deadline is an effective pressure device to spur committee action.

Each committee assignment will provide its own peculiar planning situation for the chairman. The planning of the step-by-step activities of the committee meeting will expedite matters and make effective use of the members' time. If an

hour spent in planning by the chairman saved half an hour's time for just five people in a small committee, the result would be well worth the effort.

Providing Agenda Materials

The goal of a good chairman is to have active participation from committee members during the time the group meets. One positive way to help induce this participation is for the chairman to produce and distribute the agenda of the impending committee meeting well ahead of time. It is not fair to a committee member to ask him to come into a meeting to face a problem cold and expect him to warm up to the topic immediately and begin contributing creative thoughts on the subject before the group.

There is hardly any kind of committee or board meeting where it is not appropriate for the agenda to be distributed to members a reasonable length of time before the meeting takes place. Such a procedure should be adopted as standard practice in every institution and organization that the church operates.

The reason for this procedure should be obvious. Both the chairman and the committeemen have opportunity to give thought and possibly some study to the questions to be discussed. If members of the committee come prepared to discuss a problem, the meeting is going to proceed with a great deal more dispatch than if they begin on a problem cold. Great ideas are seldom spontaneous. They come as the result of thought and analysis. At least part of this creative thinking process should take place before the committee meets. It is also true that our subconscious minds work on a topic or problem during the period prior to the meeting. Any preparation or thinking done by committee members before the meeting is going to add to their active participation and, more than likely, to a better solution to the problem.

Homework by Members

Chairmen should feel free to assign homework for upcoming committee meetings. Every person ought to consider it his duty to spend time outside of committee meetings

in preparation for the meetings. An active, intelligent, contributing member could hardly do less.

For the newcomer to the committee game, a good place to begin a little homework might be with *Robert's Rules of Order*. Even small committees must proceed in an orderly fashion. The larger the committee, the more formal the procedures will have to be. Obviously, everybody cannot be talking at once. A basic understanding of the rules by which boards and committees function will be useful to the beginner.

Certainly, the agenda should be studied carefully and thought through before the members go to the meetings. A good chairman may distribute other material to committee members for their study—background information or study references. Not infrequently financial statements may be distributed. Those who do not know how to read, understand, or analyze financial statements should not feel that accounting background is necessary. Several excellent short books and pamphlets are available on how to read and grasp the significance of financial statements. Then a brief prior analysis of balance sheets and income statements pinpoints problem areas and alerts the committee members to questions that may arise. The really dedicated committeeman may go a step further and do background reading on his own initiative. Libraries are full of good books and current periodicals on every business and management subject conceivable.

When the members of a committee know ahead of time what the agenda items are, they should give careful thought to them. Each person has his own background of training and experience upon which he can draw. When he arrives at the meeting, he will be prepared to be a contributing participant.

Accepting Responsibility

The dream of every administrator is to surround himself with subordinates and employees who feel a sense of responsibility toward their jobs and toward their organizations that is greater than the amount of responsibility actually delegated to them. We could say the same about committees.

If the member chosen to serve on a committee feels his responsibility strongly enough to prepare himself for committee meetings and strongly enough to work with the committee in seeking solutions to problems, he will be an excellent committee member. Let him disagree with others on important points and present all of the arguments he wants from the preparation he has made. If he is a man who feels his responsibility, the committee will accomplish its purpose.

Management's Part in Preparation

Management has a part to play before a committee meets if sound results are desired. First, there must be careful definition of the problem assigned to the committee. It cannot be effective wrestling with an ambiguously stated problem. What the problem is and exactly what the committee is expected to do with it must be laid out precisely. How far is the committee expected to go? How detailed should plans be? Are alternative solutions to be offered, or is one solution to be decided on? Is the committee expected to begin carrying out a decision, or is its role to be advisory? These and other questions need to be spelled out if the administrator expects effective results from his committee.

Second, it must be clear that the administrator is delegating responsibility to the committee. It is expected to report back its findings or decisions, whatever the results are. Along with this procedure, leadership must also delegate authority to the committee. In other words, the group has been authorized by the organization to carry on investigation of a problem. It may be necessary for the committee to ask for records and reports, to question employees and managers, and to gather various kinds of information from the organization. If it has to go outside the organization to get information it will need a budget and the authority to spend. Without such a delegation of authority, in many cases the committee would be powerless to gather information. And without information solutions may be worthless, because a decision usually is only as good as the information available to those who make it. This is a basic management principle.

In some cases management should be prepared to provide a committee with staff assistance. If a problem calls for technical information not represented to or available to the committee itself, means should be made available to get this information for the committee. For example, a legal question may come up, and it would be well to know the latest court rulings. Having a lawyer on the committee may not be justified, but having a lawyer look up such information for the committee's use is important. It may be desirable to have a particular kind of financial analysis that the accounting office can supply. Laboratory reports may be called for by a hospital committee, or in a manufacturing plant a technical point might need to be studied by an engineer. Specialized people can be assigned to work with a committee that needs specialized information.

CHAPTER 5

Membership and Organization of Committees

UP TO this point, all the discussion of groups has pertained to committees. A later chapter will apply the principles stated to boards of directors. Even though the terminology of the next few chapters will be largely referring to committees, most of the discussion applies to both committees and boards. After all, a board of directors is a special form of committee, more formally organized and having more authority than most committees. In the discussion to follow concerning membership and chairmen of committees, keep the board of directors in the back of your mind.

Committee Chairmen

The ideal committee chairman is a dynamic natural leader skilled at communication, tactful in dealing with others, a good listener, an excellent organizer, an authority on the subject or problem being studied, a person with energy, and one with great loyalty to the organization. We all know that Mr. Perfect Chairman is a rare individual, and we usually settle for less.

What is basically needed in a good chairman is willingness to assume the responsibility of the assignment and to devote the necessary time to accomplish it satisfactorily. If a person had these qualifications, the chances of success for the committee are high. Other qualities he possesses are to the pure good fortune of the organization. The perfect chairman is not a necessity to get the task accomplished. However, the qualities of responsibility and the budgeting of time are indispensable. How the chairman will use his talents and

carry on the business of leading a committee is the subject of the next few chapters.

If there is much room for choice in finding a committee chairman, management should look for the person who has an interest in or a burden for the subject to be taken up by the committee. This is particularly true when the committee is formed to study a special problem, rather than when it is a standing committee. A man may well be chosen for his knowledge and interest rather than for demonstrated leadership qualities. Interest and responsibility form a combination that usually is satisfactory.

There is a successful strategy in this respect that top leadership frequently employs. It occasionally happens that a certain person shows a great deal of interest in a particular problem but is opposed to the views and proposals of his leader. He may make an excellent committee chairman. Assigning him the role of responsibility rather than the free role of critic and surrounding him with a committee of people who think independently and creatively usually result in a satisfactory solution to a problem that the leader can accept and the chairman will support. The critic's thinking and communication have been channeled constructively, and he has become immersed in the problem with the responsibility of helping solve it. Leadership has gained a new supporter.

For the standing committee a chairman is needed who has more of the qualifications mentioned at the beginning of this section. Responsibility is still a prime requisite, but the ability to organize and lead a committee is also important. Enthusiasm alone will not suffice for leading a committee that meets regularly and has a continuing responsibility for some function in the organization. The organization needs a man or woman who can keep the committee operating effectively and productively over a long period of time.

In denominational work it is often the case that committee chairmanship is automatic and goes with a particular administrative post. This is normal and proper in most cases. Many of the administrator's committee functions are directly tied in with his regular duties, and the leadership qualities needed for his job qualify him for chairmanship of the

standing committee. There is no problem in choosing chairmen in such cases.

However, perhaps it is time for the administrator to challenge this concept to a degree and to explore the possibility of delegating some of his committee chairmanships to other people in his organization. Is it essential for the top administrator to chair all the committees that he does? Could some of these assignments be delegated to subordinates, who then would report to him, saving many hours of his time? Would such assignments increase the morale and effectiveness of subordinates? Would such assignments be a good training device for other people progressing up the administrative ladder? Would committee members be more free to discuss problems openly and frankly if their chief was not the chairman? Would unwanted compromises be avoided? Administrators should ask themselves such questions.

The same is true of chairmanships of boards of directors. The church's ranks are full of competent, dedicated people who are capable of leading a group of directors of the church's many institutions. The chairmanships of these boards could be more diversified than they are without losing efficiency or liaison between the institutions and controlling conferences. For example, why must every conference president be the chairman of the conference committee? This arrangement is not the pattern followed in schools, hospitals, or most kinds of corporate organizations. The president of an organization usually is the secretary of the board, and someone else is chairman.

Committee Members

The single most important guideline in selecting people to serve on committees is to find those who can make a worth-while contribution to the work of the committee. A certain amount of rotating of committee assignments is healthy. It brings fresh ideas to the committee; it helps avoid overloading some people with committee work while others may not carry as heavy a work load; and it results in the participation of a wider group in the functions and decision making of committees. But underlying these advantages of rotating committee memberships, the basic principle of

assigning people who can make a contribution is most important.

People who do not speak their convictions in committees—yes men—and those who have no knowledge or experience to bring to bear on a question are of little value to the committee or the organization. Unless the training of such a person is more important than his present contribution, no purpose is being served by keeping him on the committee. Going a step further, if a person lacks the initiative or the interest to be an active participant on a committee the chairman should ask for his resignation so that someone else can be appointed who will help carry the work load.

If the problem is a technical one, the committee needs people with the required technical knowledge. If the problem is one of internal organization, people responsible for the relationships within the organizational pattern are the prospects for committee membership. We do not expect administrators to fill the seats of a school committee studying curriculum problems. Science teachers would be of little use in planning an evangelistic campaign, and pastors would be of little help in planning the financing and construction of a hospital wing. Each of these situations needs committee members who know how to relate to the specific problem at hand and how to contribute worth-while advice and ideas for solving the problem. Yet the frequency with which this principle is violated is amazing. Too often committees are composed of people chosen because of their influence or the fact that they support the chairman's point of view.

The word *assignment* was used in reference to choosing members for committees. Although occasionally outright assignments are made as part of a person's work load, he should have the right to decline membership on committees for such reasons as lack of interest, lack of qualifications, genuine overloading, or desire to serve on a different committee. A person can be pressured into accepting service on a committee, but the product is not likely to be an active, participating committee member who will make much of a contribution. There usually are alternates available for committee membership. Committee appointments need not be automatic because of positions held.

Dedicated laymen have a great deal to offer on various conference committees and school boards. There is danger that administrators lose touch with their constituencies and become too deeply involved with the thinking of those with whom they work every day and with whom they sit on committees. In several places laymen are already serving on conference committees, and the results are refreshing.

Not many years ago an Adventist college in North America did not have one layman on its board of directors. Its reputation for stagnation and getting itself involved in minutiae was widely known. Those colleges and other institutions that have invited lawyers, physicians, certified public accountants, bankers, educators, and businessmen to be on their boards have benefited markedly. No group of laymen have tried to outvote denominational workers in religious matters. In fact, their spiritual influence has been notable.

I know of several college teachers with academy administrative backgrounds who have made themselves available to serve on academy boards. They can make excellent contributions from their experience and provide an important liaison between their college and the academy. Unfortunately, such offers were not accepted; positions on the board were already filled by virtue of position and no additions were wanted. Certainly some excellent help was overlooked.

Restated, committees should be manned by those who have needed qualifications and willingness to contribute.

Organization of Committees

The two key persons on every committee are the chairman and the secretary. The duties of the chairman have been briefly alluded to, and they will be discussed in more detail in the next two chapters. Basically, it is the duty of the chairman to plan the agenda for the committee meetings, to preside at the meetings, to see that the functions and activities of the committee proceed as planned, and to be responsible for the results or committee objectives. He is further responsible to report the work of the committee to the administration. During the entire life of the committee, the chairman normally is the link between the administrator and the committee.

The duties of the secretary are to introduce items for committee consideration, read reports from subcommittees, and record the committee proceedings. Depending on the wishes of the committee, the record he keeps might include a summary of all significant discussion, or it might consist merely of members present and actions or conclusions the committee voted. Generally there is no formality associated with choosing a secretary. He or she may be a person appointed by the chairman or elected by nomination and vote of the committee. The secretary should be able to phrase the actions of the committee accurately so that the minutes will reflect what was voted. Shorthand is seldom a necessary qualification unless detailed notes are desired.

The role of a committee secretary differs vastly from that of a board of directors secretary. As just mentioned, the committee secretary is chosen informally from the committee membership. The secretary of the board usually is the president or chief administrator of the institution over which the board presides. As such the secretary is the main one involved in making up the agenda and the plans to be discussed by the board. This duty makes him a more formal and active officer of the group than is the case with the secretary of many committees. From that point, the functions are similar. The board secretary is responsible for keeping minutes of the proceedings and publishing and distributing the minutes to board members. Committee minutes may or may not be duplicated and distributed to members, depending on the committee's wishes. If a committee is widely dispersed after committee meetings, such minutes should be duplicated and distributed. In other cases a single set of minutes kept by the secretary or the chairman may be sufficient.

Beyond this outline of duties there are no universal rules for committee organization. A committee is free to adopt whatever rules or structure it deems appropriate. If committees are large, one procedure is to break the committee up into subcommittees to tackle assigned portions of a particular problem. Both committees and boards may operate effectively by working in smaller groups. Perhaps half the time of the meeting can be spent in this manner and the other

half in having the subcommittees report their conclusions back to the whole group for discussion and adoption or rejection. In this case, each subgroup would need a chairman and a recording secretary.

Size of Committees

No known rules exist about the size of committees. If you have ever served on committees, you probably have observed that the efficiency and dispatch with which a committee conducts its work is inversely proportional to the size of the committee. Smaller committees can get things done faster than large committees for the simple reason that there are fewer viewpoints and ideas demanding the time and attention of the committee. If groups of 150 to 200 people try to debate and edit a particular report, the result is a large dose of frustration and hundreds of man-hours consumed.

It may well be that large committees are more thorough in tackling a problem than small committees are. More experience and judgment can be brought to bear on a problem. But this is not necessarily the case. A small committee carefully chosen can be as effective and thorough as a large committee, perhaps more so. Pit a small well-qualified committee against a large one filled with people who have no particular skill or knowledge of the problem, and compare the results. The work from both groups may be equally dedicated and honest, but there certainly is a difference in efficiency and results.

The desirable size for a committee rests on the situation and results wanted. If the problem is of a technical nature, if speed is desirable, and if quick action is wanted, a three- or four-man committee can do the job best. If speed is not essential, if it is desirable to use the group to disseminate information, if wide judgment and experience are desirable, or if the leader wants to use the group as a sounding board for a new idea or plan, the best procedure is a large committee of twelve to thirty people. The administrator will have to use his judgment about size when he sets up a committee. If any error commonly is made in this regard, it is that committees and boards are too large.

CHAPTER 6

Blueprint for Problem Solving

NOT ALL committees are formed for the purpose of studying a major problem, but enough of them are, and enough inexperience and lack of knowledge on how to attack a major problem exist that it is worth while to study problem-solving techniques. Many of the steps here discussed are pertinent to lesser problems also, and most committees have their share of them.

The scientific method of problem solving was developed many years ago by the physical scientists for studying problems in the laboratory. Through the years researchers in the social sciences and the humanities have adopted the scientific method for studying problems in their areas, and they have found it an effective tool. To be sure, the applications are different. The social scientist cannot control his variables to a problem as a physical scientist can. The social scientist must deal with people, who largely are uncontrollable variables, whereas the physical scientist can keep close control of conditions in his laboratory study. In spite of that difference, the method is useful in all disciplines.

Along with the social sciences the field of business management has found that the scientific method has been an effective device for tackling problems of business and administration. Plenty of argument still exists as to whether management is an art or a science, with the majority opinion being that management has not yet acquired a body of knowledge and theory that qualifies it to be termed a science. Nevertheless, the scientific method is useful for problem solving, and managers make extensive use of it.

What holds true for management in using this method is more true for a committee, because it can examine each step of the procedure more thoroughly than a single individual can hope to do. It can apply group judgment to each phase of the method.

The scientific method often goes by other names, such as logic, analytical approach, or objective problem solving. Different sources show some modification in the various steps of the process, but the steps are always similar. Briefly, the scientific method consists of the following steps, each of which will be discussed in order:

1. Define and clarify the problem.
2. Gather pertinent data.
3. Organize and analyze the data.
4. Choose alternative solutions.
5. Analyze the alternative solutions.
6. Choose a solution and try it.
7. Re-evaluate and follow-up.

Define and Clarify the Problem

Decision making is the process of making a judgment among alternative ends. It is a definite, assertive intellectual act. The decision is not the most difficult part of problem solving. First of all, effective decision making hinges on the ability of the problem solvers to identify the problem clearly.

At first glance this seems like a simple matter, but it is anything but that. A misunderstanding or misstatement of the exact problem results in gathering data that are not pertinent to the problem and a solution that does not fit. Ambiguity and inaccuracy in stating the problem make it impossible to come up with a clear-cut decision on how to solve the problem. Oversimplification of a problem is a common error, the result being an inadequate solution for the situation. Problem clarification is difficult, thought-provoking work that requires examination of a whole group of interrelated causes and effects.

A committee assigned to a major problem should be prepared to spend from one to three sessions carefully defining the problem. Until that point is reached it will not be pos-

sible to go far in carrying out the remaining steps of the problem-solving method.

At times these first few sessions may be the exception to many of the rules for conducting orderly committee meetings. A session of brainstorming may serve a useful purpose. Let people explore their views and their thinking freely. Let them say anything they want to say to get it off their chest. Often it is necessary to let a committee go through this filtering process before it is ready to do serious business. For a time it may appear to be organized confusion, but as the process goes on, important factors begin to come to the top and take shape and superfluous ones drop away. At this point the chairman can pull the group together and begin to chart the course. Out of the process the beginnings of clarifying the problem appear.

Occasionally a problem can be stated in one well-worded sentence, but not often. Problems usually have interrelated parts, and sometimes it is not *a* problem at all, but a *group* of problems. Often it is fitting to state a problem with some form of general statement, followed by statements of sub-problems.

For example, let us say we recognize that the over-all problem of a particular organization is to get back on a profit-making basis. This sounds simple at first, but soon it is found that many smaller problems exist. What has caused the organization to be unprofitable? It may be that management has failed to set correct objectives and policies. It may be because of personnel problems—either because workers are inefficient or friction exists among them. The organization may need complete reorganization of either physical facilities or managerial personnel or both. Labor and personnel relations may be at the root of the problem; or inventory policies, the cash position, losses owing to bad credit risks, lack of sales effort, or general morale may be related to or causing unprofitable operations. Seldom is only one of these factors responsible. Any of them, all of them, or any combination of them can put an organization in trouble. This is just the beginning of a list of possible subproblems. Many external factors could be mentioned as well, such as competition and general economic conditions.

A committee must ask itself many questions in determining the real problem. It must dig under the surface and bring to light all related areas. It may conduct interviews, study financial records, and seek all kinds of counsel. What appeared at the first to be the problem may be quite different from what is found to be the actual problem.

Some years ago I saw the report of a study made to determine why students drop out of school. Much attention was attracted by the study, and a great deal of lavish praise was heaped upon it by various groups, including an accrediting association. The outcome of the study indicated that the most frequent reasons given for withdrawal from school were financial. Later interviewing showed this to be a false concept. Students first gave this reason because it was logical and unarguable. A year or two later these same people were willing to tell the real reasons why they quit school. Financial considerations did not head the list. Certainly any solutions to the problem as originally thought to be apt would not have solved the dilemma of determining how best to hold young people in school. Every committee assigned a problem to study needs to recognize that defining a problem may be a difficult process, and it should be prepared to work hard at it.

When a committee has defined its problem, it should put it into words. Problems of semantics, shaded meanings, and various relationships get in the way. It is necessary to phrase the problem so clearly that other people will understand what the committee means it to say. This too is hard work.

A committee should never think that its definition or clarification of a problem must fit the conceptions of it that management had when the assignment was made. Indeed, thorough investigation may alter the understanding of a problem. It is important that the committee confer with the administrators before going on to other studies. If there is a difference of opinion or a misunderstanding about the committee's findings now, it needs to be ironed out with management right away. Management may need to be sold on the idea that the committee's view is correct. If management's view is different for reasons or knowledge that the committee did not have, it may be necessary to get back

to studying the problem. Management and committee should agree on the statement of the problem before further steps are taken.

Gather Pertinent Data

Often committee members are chosen because of their experience in and technical knowledge of the situation under study. If such is the case, the members may be able to do the job of gathering data adequately. In many cases assignments can be made to individual committee members to gather particular information for the committee's use. This means that the committee members will be spending a lot of time outside the meetings in gathering data for the group. Some of them may be fortunate enough to have their own office personnel doing the work under their direction.

However, most of the time a committee is not an effective device for the fact-gathering step of problem solving. Management often has to see to it that the proper specialists, staff advisers, or research personnel collect the necessary data. Committee members often are not prepared or trained for this function, and even in cases where they may be well prepared, it must be remembered that the fact-gathering step is time consuming. The administrator cannot often expect a man to hold a committee post, spend long hours gathering information for a problem, and keep his own job or office running smoothly.

Only in rare instances is a committee assignment of this nature a temporary full-time job. When it is, the committee might do its own spade work. Usually efficiency is best served by supplying the necessary data to the committee rather than expecting the committee to do this work.

The importance of clarifying the problem needs to be restated now. The search for pertinent information must be narrowed to what has a bearing on the problem. To do otherwise amounts to fact gathering of impossible proportions as to time and expense. The universe of knowledge having some remote relationship to the problem defies any searcher for facts. Not only would the fact-gathering step be impossible but the analysis stage would also consist of tremendous amounts of wasted efforts. All the data would

have to be sifted to decide what information was useful and what should be discarded.

For these reasons, it is necessary at the beginning to state the problem correctly. An incorrect analysis of the problem results in time wasted gathering and sifting pertinent information.

It is an old saying in the profession of management that a decision is only as good as the information the decision maker had at his disposal. This principle can be demonstrated over and over again in the failures of organizations. Few administrators have not had the experience of seeing a decision go wrong, only to find out afterward that the information they had was inadequate. If only they had had sufficient correct information, the decision would have been better. No doubt everybody can boast 20-20 hindsight.

It is the responsibility of the committee to examine and judge with an extremely critical eye the adequacy of the information it has. It is much better to take the risk of challenging the adequacy of the proffered data than face the risk of a sorry conclusion. The committee ought to be free at any time to declare that it needs more information or a different kind of information.

There is a point where the expense of fact gathering needs to be weighed against the additional accuracy needed in the solution. Any statistician can verify that beyond a certain point it takes a huge amount of additional data to improve accuracy by a small amount.

The committee should be alert for another vitally important possibility in the fact-gathering step. It occasionally comes to light in both the fact-gathering step and the analysis step that the problem itself needs to be restudied and restated. Available information can indicate that the problem must be rephrased to fit facts, or no sensible solution can be determined. Information gathered may show that the problem itself was misunderstood or incorrectly analyzed. The honest committee should not be too proud to go back to step one and start over. There is a human tendency to regard work accomplished as a sacred cow that we don't like to disturb. But sacred cows need to have their tails twisted once in a while.

Organize and Analyze the Data

For a committee, organizing and analyzing the data may be the most time-consuming down-to-earth hard work in the problem-solving procedure. There are no short cuts. All the available data must be laid out on the table, read and studied meticulously, sorted, shuffled, and restudied. Undoubtedly some of it will prove to be useless and will need to be discarded. Some of it may be incomplete and need to be augmented. Each bit of information needs to be analyzed to determine its usefulness. As the pieces fall into place, the information can be organized into subtopics or groups, and interrelated information can be noted.

Four possible results come from this step. First, as previously mentioned, an analysis of data may suggest a restudy and reshaping of the problem. Second, such analysis may show that the fact-gathering step has not yet been completed and needs to be resumed before any further progress can be made. Third, analysis of information points clearly to the ultimate solution of the problem without further study. We should recognize that this is not the usual case but that it can happen. The evidence may point so overwhelmingly in one direction that consideration of alternatives is unnecessary. The fourth and usually the next step in the problem-solving procedure is to recognize that there are several possible solutions or alternatives, and we turn our attention to that next.

The amount of space devoted to discussion of analysis as compared to other parts of this chapter should not imply that analysis is one of the shorter steps in the procedure. It is one of the longest and most difficult of the group.

Choose Alternative Solutions

A certain amount of confusion exists among people who work on problems as to what alternatives are. Simply stated, an alternative is one of several possible solutions to a problem, not necessarily always a satisfactory solution in every respect.

Seldom is there only one way out of a situation or only one possible solution to a problem. If every problem, every solution, every idea, were either completely right or wrong,

positive or negative, it would be easier to draw a fine line down the middle of everything and distinguish between them. But real life is not like that. We have every shade of gray between black and white. Every solution to a problem has advantages and disadvantages that have to be weighed. The best possible choice we can make probably will cause harm to someone or something, because perfect choices seldom if ever exist. If they did, there would always be one choice standing out so clearly that alternatives would not be necessary.

Usually three or four possible courses of action (or inaction) present themselves when a problem arises. This means the planners should reason from the analysis of facts, data, and information that there are several different ways the problem can be treated. If a problem is complicated by interrelationships, such as the example mentioned under "Define and Clarify the Problem," alternatives might be different combinations of a group of corrective measures.

Suppose an organization feels the need of a new administrator. Alternative courses of action might include the following: (1) Keep the present administrator and do nothing, (2) fire the administrator and hire a new one, (3) keep the administrator but make him change his ways of doing things, or (4) begin training someone to take the administrator's place and promote the present administrator. This is a simplified example, but it illustrates that the basic concept of alternatives is to recognize all separate possible courses of action. Most of the confusion arises when people make up a list of recommendations for desirable changes and think they are alternatives when such is not the case.

It should be emphasized again: there is seldom only one possible solution to a problem, and usually there are more than one that would work. This is why a committee (or administrator) studying and analyzing a problem must make several proposals or alternative suggestions.

Analyze the Alternative Solutions

The old saying that there is more than one way to skin a cat seems to be true of almost every problem. There are several possible alternative routes that can be taken. Obviously,

we cannot take all of them; a choice has to be made. But before one solution can be chosen over other possible alternatives, we need to analyze what is involved.

Every activity or course of action of any importance in an organization sets up a chain of reactions and consequences. The interrelationships within an institution or organization are multitudinous; one thing affects another, and that, in turn, affects something else. A decision about adding personnel may affect organizational structure, pay scales, promotion policies, the current cash position, and so on. Personnel problems generally have widespread effects on the morale of employees. Production problems are related to scheduling, budgets, long-term financing, sales, personnel, transportation, purchasing, product design, or any combination of these areas.

There is a saying that when the President of the United States sneezes the stock market on Wall Street catches a cold. Something like that happens in organizations, because they are small social complexes with their own structures. All phases of firms, institutions, and organizations are interrelated with one another.

Therefore, various alternatives proposed as solutions to a problem need to be analyzed thoroughly by the group responsible for studying the problem. Since any one proposal is seldom one hundred per cent perfect for the situation, this analysis is a vital step in the process. Two methods for making such an analysis will be suggested, but anyone can innovate other methods easily.

Committing thoughts to paper forces us to make them considerably more concise and well organized than when they are only flitting around in the back of our minds. Using paper and pencil (or a blackboard and chalk) can be an effective way to proceed in analyzing alternative solutions to a problem. The committee can head a separate column or sheet for each alternative that has been suggested and then make a thorough list of all the advantages and disadvantages of each proposal. The committee should probe into the possible relationships and consequences of each alternative. It should be recognized that subjective judgment plays an important part. No amount of factual data, computers, and

mathematical formulas will eliminate the necessity of subjective judgment. Objective data can only improve the quality of our judgment.

When the lists have been made up the committee can weigh the arguments pro and con. Some advantages and disadvantages are more important than others. Some are going to cause certain reactions whereas in others the possibility of a given consequence may be remote. Some will cost more money than others. From this analysis the committee will try to choose the alternative that has the most advantages or desirable consequences and the least number of disadvantages or undesirable consequences. Having done this carefully with judgment, the committee has done its job as well as it can be done. It has studied the entire problem logically and come up with a logical answer. No more can be expected.

Another approach to analysis can be made by constructing a matrix. Across the top can be a listing of the alternatives, and down the left side can be a list of advantages, disadvantages, or consequences that can be applied to all the alternatives. The committee can assign a weight of 1 to 10 (or any other range) to each consequence and logically assign a number in that range as that consequence

| | <i>Alternatives</i> | | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | <i>No. 1</i> | <i>No. 2</i> | <i>No. 3</i> | <i>No. 4</i> |
| Consequence No. 1 | 6 | 4 | 3 | 5 |
| Consequence No. 2 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 6 |
| Consequence No. 3 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 8 |
| Consequence No. 4 | 9 | 4 | 3 | 2 |
| Consequence No. 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Consequence No. 6 | 3 | 2 | 7 | 8 |
| | <hr/> 28 | <hr/> 22 | <hr/> 25 | <hr/> 34 |

or advantage is believed to relate to each of the alternatives. For example, let us say that one of the advantages hoped for in the problem is improved morale. The committee may reason that this point should be assigned a possible weight of 6 for alternative No. 1, 4 for alternative No. 2, 3 for alternative No. 3, and 5 for alternative No. 4. When each consequence is so weighted, the columns for each alternative can be added, and the one having the highest total is the best solution. In the illustration on the previous page, alternative No. 4 would be chosen.

Choose a Solution and Try It

An alternative has been picked. Now it should be tested. Despite the amount of objectivity used in its selection, the choice is not foolproof. Variables that cannot be quantified may be involved, and where two alternatives look nearly equal in attractiveness the decision goes back to judgment. Experience, the feel of the situation, or knowledge may be involved in this judgment, and these factors cannot and should not be ignored.

At this point the committee may have completed its work. It may even be that it will stop at the previous step by submitting its analysis to management for final decision. At any rate, whether management or the committee makes the choice among alternatives, management will have to be the one to put the plan or solution into action. The committee is not the device for activating a decision.

If possible, the plan or solution should be put on some kind of trial basis. Often a product can be tried in limited markets, a plan can be tried in one department to begin with, or a new idea can be tried in one geographical area to see how it will work. This trial period gives an opportunity for evaluation before an organization is fully committed to a plan on a large scale.

Where such a plan is feasible the committee may have one further function with the problem it has been studying—evaluating the results. Too many plans or solutions are not subjected to this step. Often adjustments and changes are needed before a solution is as effective as it should be.

Re-evaluate and Follow-up

At some point before an organization fully commits its finances, personnel, and physical assets to a plan or a problem solution, the committee that gave study to the problem should re-evaluate its decision. In every such situation there is a point of no return. Up to that point the organization can still drop the plan, change or modify it, or decide to go ahead. Beyond that point the commitment cannot easily be reversed. Even if the plan is scrapped later, the total costs are simply lost, or sunk, costs. New interrelationships have been created that are extremely difficult to unravel.

If the plan or alternative is of a nature that it can be tested on some smaller scale before it is put into full operation, this is an ideal point for re-evaluation. If such a situation is not feasible, a re-evaluation should be made before the order is finally given to put the solution into action.

When a committee's planning work is done over a comparatively short time and the time lapse between planning and implementation is not long, the re-evaluation step may not be essential. But when a committee's planning work is spread over weeks or months, to omit re-evaluation can be dangerous.

There are several considerations that can be rechecked without taking an undue amount of time or creating any serious delay. The committee should recheck its analysis and critically review its subjective judgments. Are conditions still the same? Has any necessary variable changed since the decision was made, such as general economic or market conditions, the financial situation, the availability of personnel, or management's convictions? If the committee is convinced that its judgments of the situation are substantially the same, the wheels can be set in motion. If there have been changes, adjustment must be made or the feasibility of the alternative must be examined to see whether it still meets the changed conditions. If it does not, the committee must back up in the procedures and reanalyze the alternatives, perhaps choosing a new alternative.

Even after the solution or plan has been put into action,

there is value in having the committee do a follow-up evaluation of how well the solution is working. The results can be compared with the advantages that were envisioned by the committee. In some cases the results can be objectively measured by units processed, people trained, profits earned, new customers contacted, volume of sales, and so forth. More often the results will have to be evaluated subjectively. Then recommendations can be made for adjustment in the plan in order for the alternative solution to live up to its full potential.

After the Committee Meeting

TOO FEW people who serve on committees realize that there are ethical considerations involved, particularly in the matter of committee loyalty. Virtually nothing has been written on the concept of committee ethics, and only a small amount has been written on ethical problems of board members. The two are similar, although the concept goes deeper and is more complex for members of a board of directors than for committee members. However, everything included in this chapter is equally applicable to both.

A few illustrations will point out the need for ethics in the attitudes and reactions of committee members:

1. A school principal has a student-discipline problem that needs to be handled promptly, so he calls the discipline committee together. The committee discusses the case thoroughly, considers every angle carefully, and decides that the student should be expelled from school. The principal presides at the meeting but does not vote. Later when the student's parents protest vigorously to the principal he says he is sorry but that he did not vote for the action. The committee decided it, and even though he is not in favor of expelling the student, there is not much he can do about the situation.

2. An organization facing a difficult decision has set up a committee to study the problem and recommend a solution. During the study a strong difference of opinion develops between two factions. Finally the committee votes on a solution, the motion passing by a vote of 5 to 2. One of the two dissenting members goes to the manager of the firm and

announces that he cannot go along with the action and will refuse to allow his department to cooperate with the decision.

3. A college committee of faculty members has been appointed by the college president to study a perplexing campus problem causing unrest among the students. The members of the committee have convictions that a moral principle is involved, and after careful study they make their decision. The decision is not unanimous, and it proves to be unpopular with the student body. The campus student newspaper decides to run a feature story covering the event, and sends a student reporter to interview the members of the faculty committee. One member tells the reporter only what the committee decided. Three other members tell the reporter how they voted (one for and two against) and why they voted as they did on the issue.

4. At the monthly church board meeting the name of Brother Blank is brought up because evidence has been presented that he had been involved in immoral activity. After long discussion the board decides by a 25 to 5 vote that Brother Blank should be dropped from church membership. This is a large church of more than 1,000 members, most of whom live in the immediate area. Within 24 hours the news of Brother Blank's activities and disfellowshipping is common knowledge in the entire community, including most of the details discussed at the church board meeting.

Each of these examples illustrates unethical behavior on the part of members of a committee and of some other people. Unfortunately, this kind of thing is more common than we may be willing to admit, even in church organizations and among ministers as well as administrators.

It is the duty of every committee member to give his honest views during the discussion of a problem and to present the arguments to support his convictions, whether or not they agree with the majority opinion. *But once a committee has given its group judgment to a problem and decided on a solution by a democratic majority vote, the dissenting individuals no longer have the right of dissent.* Every member of that committee owes his absolute loyalty to the committee and to the decision it made. It is up to every member to give his moral

support to that decision and to stand by the committee one hundred per cent. The person who cannot do that has no business serving on the committee and is lacking in ethical values. If a man cannot maintain his loyalty to his committee or his organization in the light of personal views, he should be honest enough to withdraw. This same ethical relationship pertains to the chairman of the committee and between management and the committee. Every organization is forced to operate according to the view of the majority. Anything else leads quickly to anarchy and is a threat to the entire group.

A great deal of what goes on in committee and board meetings is of a confidential or semiconfidential nature. Keeping such information confidential is a critically ethical matter. The thoroughness of discussion needed to meet problems in committee meetings demands that members be free to speak their minds and to make statements within the group that would not be proper to make publicly. No committee member should be placed in the position of meeting his confidential statements in his office, in the elevator, or on the street corner. What goes on inside a committee meeting should have the status of privileged communication, a term not unfamiliar in political, legal, and religious circles.

Another basic reason for maintaining confidences is that the committee owes its first responsibility for reporting its work to the management, not to friends, relatives, or other personnel of the organization. In a majority of cases when information gets out to the personnel before management has had an opportunity to appraise it and fit it into organizational plans, the result can be anywhere from inconvenient to disastrous. Timing, employee morale, important related decisions, and various interrelationships demand that committee activity and committee information be kept confidential until there is an agreement to make it public. Premature divulging of committee information can too often jeopardize the future work of the committee or of management. Members of a committee need to show a high degree of professional ethics in this regard.

Those who cannot or do not conform to these ethical standards should not be appointed to committees.

Committee Follow-up

Follow-up has already been mentioned in connection with specific problem solving, but there are many other situations where follow-up is necessary. A committee is entitled to know whether its recommendations or decisions have been carried out and how. Even if the committee is not responsible for activating a decision, it should either be informed or inform itself of the outcome. Inevitably, there will be occasions when a committee's recommendations are not followed by management, and in such cases there at least needs to be an explanation of the reason. In some cases the committee may suggest alterations that will allow the plan to be carried out, and in a small percentage of cases after proper explanation has been made, the committee will have to accept the fact that its recommendations were not adopted.

In some situations a committee may remain in charge of seeing that a plan is carried out. It may have authority to assign sections of the plan to various individuals or departments. In these cases, follow-up is imperative. Oral or written reports or both will be required, and the committee will need to evaluate these reports, measure them by the standards set up in the plan, and make new recommendations or adjustments as may appear expedient.

Follow-up is a control device and would operate no differently whether performed by management or a committee except that the organization would be keeping the advantages of group judgment in the control function as well as the planning function. Follow-up shows either that the plan was well made or that it needs changes. It also is necessary for seeing that those who have been given responsibility under the plan carry it out. Without follow-up, too many good plans would die on the vine because nobody is seeing that they are carried out. In this sense follow-up is a motivational device, because those who have been assigned tasks know they are going to be held accountable for accomplishing their assignments.

Self-evaluation

A good committee should periodically take a good thorough look at itself. Critical self-analysis is both easier to do

and easier to take than analysis from outside sources. Self-analysis most likely will eliminate the need of ever being scrutinized by those outside the group. Committee members will willingly make suggestions as to how the committee can improve its performance if the chairman creates the opportunity and the atmosphere for it.

One way that a committee might evaluate its own work is to discuss answers to some of the following questions:

1. Have the recommendations turned out to be successful?
2. Has the committee attempted to be objective in its appraisals?
3. Has the management expressed satisfaction with the committee's work?
4. Has the committee sought out the most effective methods and tools for gathering information and making analysis?
5. Has the committee made requests for professional help or advice?
6. Has the group organized and used its time efficiently, or has it wasted time?
7. Have the members of the committee retained their enthusiasm and sense of responsibility?
8. Has the committee been receptive to new ideas?
9. Has the committee met its deadlines and schedules?
10. Has the committee been diligent in gathering sufficient information before making decisions?

The members of the committee can ask themselves these questions with no need for embarrassment or self-incrimination. The only purpose of self-evaluation is improvement. If the answers to these questions are not satisfactory, the committee should be willing to spend time discussing what needs to be improved and how to do it. Such a committee will be an asset to the organization.

Disbanding Committees

Nothing could be more useless than a committee that has finished its work but keeps on meeting. It is interesting to note how all kinds of organizational groups, including committees, have a way of perpetuating themselves after the

need for them has come to an end. Such is an expense that organizations cannot afford. When a duly appointed committee has faithfully and diligently completed the job assigned to it, the administrator should see that it receives proper recognition and thanks for a job well done. Then he should dismiss it.

The continuance of standing committees is another matter, of course, but a word of advice here is also appropriate. Standing committees are the ones that are likely to perpetuate themselves beyond their useful lives. Every institution and organization needs to make a periodic appraisal of its committee structures to determine whether committees in certain areas are needed any longer. Perhaps old ones should be abandoned, new ones formed, or existing committees merged or reorganized to fit the evolutionary changes that all organizations go through.

With all this discussion of committees, it is to an organization's benefit to keep committee work to the minimum for which it is useful and effective. An organization should be willing to challenge its committee structure and close a committee down occasionally rather than seek for new reasons for creating more committees.

The Board of Directors

ALMOST EVERYTHING that has been said so far is applicable to boards of directors even though it has been directed primarily to committees. The discussion concerning conducting meetings, preparation for meetings, membership, and relationships after meetings fits board members as well as committee members.

Basically a board is a committee, a special kind of committee. Most of what has been discussed so far is not entirely complete when we apply it to boards of directors, because the relationship of the board to an incorporated organization is much more sophisticated and complex. The board is cloaked with utmost authority, granted by the organization's charter from the State, and its responsibility is infinitely greater and broader than that of a committee. It is thoroughly responsible to the owners or constituency and to the State. Its authority is both legal and institutional.

Instead of being appointed by management and assigned a particular task, as is a committee, the board is higher in the chain of command than management, and does in fact hire and fire management. Although our discussion of committees has relevance to boards of directors, it does not go far enough. For that reason, it is appropriate to give some special attention now to boards of directors.

It may be confusing at times for the laymen to find the terms "committee" and "board" used interchangeably. For example, in denominational work the term "committee" is used extensively all the way from the local or State "conference committee" right up to the General Conference Com-

mittee. In these situations the groups referred to are not committees in a real sense but actually are boards of directors. They have the same authority and responsibility as boards, and they perform the same policy-making and legislative functions as do boards of firms and other organizations.

On the other hand, the church board is a little different in that it is the regulatory and policy-making group governing the activities of an individual church. The individual church is not a separate legal entity, therefore the church board is not clothed with the same degree of legal authority as a board of directors is. Individual churches are part of the conference corporation, and what authority they have is delegated to them by the conference committee (a board).

Reference is sometimes made to groups called committees of the board. This is simply a practical device for accomplishing the necessary work of the board. The members of the board (including a church board) may be divided into subgroups for the purpose of studying separate problems or items on an agenda. A committee of the board has no power or authority in itself. Its job is to report back to the full board of directors, which is the body having power to pass actions, make resolutions, issue directives, and so on.

Another term is "executive board." By many people this group's activities and authority are not well understood. Many institutions and organizations have large boards whose membership is scattered over a wide geographic area. Because of this, full board meetings are held only two to four times a year. In the meantime, important business has to be taken care of, and higher authorization than management is required. In these cases, an executive board frequently is picked from among the board members who live close enough to be called together occasionally with a minimum of inconvenience and loss of time. This group is empowered to act for the board on interim business. But it should be noted that any action or decision taken by an executive board is not final or legally binding until it has been approved and voted by the full board at its regular meeting.

Reasons for Boards of Directors

The reason that corporations, both profit and nonprofit, are governed by boards of directors is that this arrangement is a legal requirement of every State. Before any organization can get a corporate charter from the State it must have a board of directors. State incorporation laws are not uniform, although they are quite similar in most respects. Incorporation laws commonly state that there must be a minimum of three directors with no limitations in number beyond that. Without this legal requirement it is quite possible that family-owned and church-owned corporations would seldom organize a board of directors.

The reason for requiring corporations, both profit and nonprofit, to have boards is basically a sound one. The organizational distance between large numbers of stockholders and large numbers of constituents in the case of nonprofit corporations is too great for meaningful communication or control over the management of the organization. The stockholders or constituents elect the board of directors to represent them in running and controlling the corporation. In so doing they invest the board with all their ownership rights and authority, with a few exceptions. The board then becomes the body vested with complete controlling power within the law to operate the organization. It is close enough to the corporation and its management to communicate and exercise this control, whereas such is not usually possible for stockholders or constituents.

A word of explanation may be helpful for the layman. Profit corporations are always organized by issuing shares of stock, which are purchased by stockholders. Such persons then become owners of the corporation, although for practical purposes they are absentee owners whose rights and privileges are concentrated in a small group—the board. Nonprofit corporations organized by churches, charitable organizations, and political subdivisions do not issue stock. But they do have constituencies that stand in the place of stockholders. For example, the church membership of a State elects delegates from the individual churches to represent those churches during election years. These delegates

attend what is called a constituency meeting, at which time they elect the conference officials and the conference committee (a board of directors). Although there are fundamental differences between profit and nonprofit corporations, the functioning of the two as between owners and management is virtually identical. Technically, every church member in a conference is a constituent of his conference's various institutions, including academies and colleges.

Functions of Boards

Many people accuse boards of being a group of yes men. Some boards fit this description, but this is far from their intended or necessary function. Some boards seem to be bent on the opposite extreme, that of blocking every move proposed by management. In this case the organization is in real trouble, and again this is not the proper or necessary function of a board of directors.

Almost any discussion of the functions of boards in textbooks quotes the standard items that most people are familiar with. These include the setting of major objectives, major policies, hiring management, setting managerial salaries, reviewing over-all operations, and charting the general course for the organization. It is generally understood that the board does not involve itself with daily operating routine. The actual operation of the organization is delegated to management, which then functions within the over-all limits set by the directors. The board is thought of as the planning body, a mystical group that is not around very often but that somehow maintains a heavy hand of control.

Actually, all of this is true, but it does not do much to explain the true function of a board or how it actually operates in directing an organization. One common misconception is that all initiative for change, for planning, for setting objectives, and for guiding the organization comes from individual members at large of the board, but this is not a realistic picture of the way boards function.

The two most active and innovative participants in a board meeting, without any close rivals for that distinction, are the chairman and the secretary. Of these two, the secretary of the board is the one on which a board centers or

functions. The chairman of the board presides at the meetings and normally works with the secretary in the preparation of agenda items and planning for the meeting, but it is the secretary of the board who does the real spade work.

The normal situation is that the secretary of the board is the manager of the organization. As the secretary, his duties are to prepare and keep all the records before, during, and after board meetings. But his function as the secretary of the board is not the focal point of his relationship to the board. The central point of his relationship is as the manager of the organization, and this is a point easily misunderstood and unappreciated by most people who are not familiar with boards other than the fact that this "powerful" body passes resolutions and directives that affect their lives and their jobs.

It is the manager of an organization who is the real motivator of action, the real planner behind the scenes, the important cog in the machinery that produces change or progress, whether we are talking about a conference, a hospital, a school, or an industry. It operates the same way in every corporate organization. Board members are busy people, but they do not spend their time within the organization. Most of them are outsiders, who come in at infrequent intervals and are called upon to make important decisions on the basis of a modest exposure to existing problems. Grasp this reality, and you begin to see the realistic function of a board and its relationship with the manager.

Without the manager, the board has practically no information about the organization except what it could get from a visit to the firm (seldom if ever visited) or could pick up from informants or gossipers. The link or tie between the manager and the board is a mutually dependent relationship. It is not the board that creates plans, it is the manager who makes the plans and presents them to the board to examine, discuss, modify, and approve or disapprove. The manager is the board's eyes and ears within the organization and very often the only source of information about it. The board must rely on the manager to do the creative thinking, to present plans for the future, to inform the board of

organizational problems, to make recommendations to the board, and even to interpret facts and problems. There must exist a close relationship of harmony and trust between the board and management for an organization to function at all. A board can easily be misled by an unscrupulous manager. When this relationship of trust is not established, a board has little choice but to change managers and elect someone the members can have faith in.

The manager-board relationship and the functioning of a board then come down to two concepts. The manager is the real cog in the machine, the one who initiates most of the planning and activity. In close cooperation with the chairman of the board, the manager draws up proposals, makes up the agenda, and plans what the board will do at its meeting. The chairman then is the presiding officer and is responsible that the plan for the meeting be carried out.

The function of the board of directors, then, is often quite different from that envisioned by most people. True enough, the board has final say over plans before they can be activated, and it is the board that votes plans and policies into existence before they have any authoritative status. It is how this is done that is so little understood. *The basic function* of a board of directors, as this writer sees it, is to force management to think through its propositions and be able to defend them adequately before the board. The greatest contribution a board member may make to the organization he is serving is *to ask the discerning question*. It is the duty of the board to question, to probe, and to analyze the facts and information brought to it for consideration. If the members of the board are convinced that what management is proposing is to the best interest of the organization's future, then it is the function and duty of the board to give its approval and put that plan into action by voting it. On the other hand, if the members are not so convinced, the job of the board is to say No or to send the plan back to management for further work, to be presented again at a later meeting. This is why the best board members are those with the knowledge, experience, and background to analyze problems and help management make decisions. As was said, the board is not around to familiarize itself with daily operations. The mem-

bers must grasp the situations as they are presented to them. In some respects a board is more of a watchdog than it is a planning body, with the manager being the real key to the organization's operation.

All this discussion is not meant to imply that board members never hear of a problem until they sit down in the plush chairs in the room often reserved for board meetings. Although the board relies on the manager, any intelligent manager knows full well how definitely he needs his board. Without board approval, all his planning and dreaming about accomplishments for his organization have been done for nothing. It is the responsibility of the manager (and secretary of the board) to distribute agendas of coming board meetings well ahead of time, as well as any other material such as financial reports and explanations that board members may study. The board member who comes to the meeting with some preparation serves the organization far better than the one who does not. If nothing else, he may have given thought to the right questions that need to be asked. This is a preparation that should be sought by management, not feared. The name of the game is progress for the institution. Managerial reputations may depend on salesmanship and oratory to a small degree, but in the end they depend on accomplishment, and this requires the mutual trust and working together of the management and the board.

Choosing Board Members

The qualities to look for in choosing a person to serve on the organization's board of directors are the same as those needed for a committee—the ability to make a contribution.

Business firms have practiced this principle ever since corporations became a legal form of business organization. Even closed corporations—those wholly owned by a family or a small group of people—look to outsiders to help make up the board of directors for their firms. They choose bankers, executives of noncompeting businesses, engineers, lawyers, and prominent businessmen to serve on their boards. The reason is simple. They want to tap the combined knowledge and experience of these people to help the

management of the firm in approaching its major problems. In short, they pick board members who can make a contribution to their businesses. Memberships on boards are not prizes to be handed out for favors rendered or attached necessarily to positions. The controlling factor is whether a person can help the firm.

Denominationally, we have allowed ourselves to get into rather deep ruts in board appointments by attaching all or nearly all of them to positions in conferences and institutions. As a result, boards have many members with similar backgrounds, many of whom are not in position to make as strong a contribution to the organizations as others could make. Conference committees exist without a layman on them, whereas others are experimenting with up to 50 per cent laymen and finding it successful. Colleges need businessmen, lawyers, certified public accountants, and other professional people on their boards, as do hospitals.

Many church organizations are managed by men who have had little or no formal management training. They are forced by circumstances to pick up the reins of responsibility and learn as they go. If these men are given a board composed only of others without administrative training or experience, they face an extremely difficult situation when it comes to difficult organizational and administrative problems. Make no mistake, the church wants and needs the ministry well represented on its organizations' boards, but it must have the mix and balance that others can give.

Size, Pay, and Meetings

There are no rules of thumb as to how large a board should be, how a board member should be remunerated for his services, or how often a board should meet. It is up to each organization to determine its own needs.

Boards that are active and participate in lively board sessions and really dig into the organization's problems tend to be fairly small—from nine to fifteen members. When an institution has a board of thirty to fifty members, there undoubtedly is a bit of window dressing and prestige involved. The names of certain individuals appearing on the list of directors is impressive.

One of our colleges several years ago invited a prominent physician to serve on the board. He was widely known for his liberal donations to church organizations, but over a ten-year period he attended only two or three board meetings and was finally dropped. If the purpose of asking certain ones to serve is to add prestige to the organization, this aim is legitimate to a point. The organization pays a price for it, however, if this person does not lend his knowledge and experience to the board, and if the board gets so large that dialog and discussion become awkward. It is fortunate when both prestige and useful contributions come from the same person.

Adding to or subtracting from the board's size has no operating significance.

In profit-making firms remuneration to board members for their services is surprisingly low. It is not uncommon for directors to be paid from \$25 to \$100 per meeting, a ridiculously small amount considering the value of their service to the firm. The reason for such a low rate of payment is probably that many of these individuals are executives or professional people in upper-income brackets. People do not seek board appointments as a means of livelihood. In nonprofit organizations it is common for board members to donate their time to the organization. These same people frequently pay their own travel expenses in order to attend board meetings. It is up to the organization to set its own policies in this area, but there is no precedent for incurring high costs in inviting people to serve on a board of directors.

The organization can determine for itself how often the board should meet. A few business firms call their boards together once a month. The majority of businesses usually conduct a board meeting once each quarter or twice a year, and a minority find it necessary to meet only once a year. There is no reason why board meetings cannot be scheduled at regular intervals and that a special meeting cannot be called if an emergency or problem arises that needs the attention of the board. If a board meets very often except for emergencies, there is the suspicion that the manager is not doing his work as he ought but is insecure in his job,

needing the board to back him up in everything he does. If the board meets too seldom, it may be that the board is not being called upon to conduct the business that legitimately and legally falls within its domain. Management may be taking too much authority upon itself.

Legal Liability of Board Members

The director stands in a fiduciary, or trustee, relationship to the corporation he serves. As such he is responsible for the management of the organization, its affairs, and its property. He is responsible for the selection, supervision, and control of its committees, officers, and agents, and must exercise the vigilance, diligence, care, and skill that a prudent man would use under such circumstances. If the corporation is damaged, its property lost or wasted or transferred unlawfully, the directors are liable for it. A director may be sued for a violation of or failure to perform these duties by the corporation, another director, a stockholder, an officer of the corporation, the attorney general of the State, or a creditor. In other words, a man should never accept the responsibility of a directorship lightly.

The legal responsibility of a board of directors is in line with its powers. As a general statement, the courts will not interfere with the judgment of a board of directors unless it becomes involved in a specific illegal act. The courts usually will not set aside or rule against a decision of the directors of an organization which has been made in good faith when a board has carefully weighed its decision and has reasoned its course of action. The board has complete power to run the business within the limits of its charter, to finance the organization's needs, to buy and sell property, to hire and fire managers, to set the policies of operation, and to take necessary steps to solve the organization's problems.

The board members are not liable for losses incurred because of an error in judgment made in good faith. For example, there is no personal liability of directors if the firm suffers a net loss from operations as long as the directors are acting as careful, prudent men. In a free and openly competitive society there are too many variables that they cannot control.

It should be noted that a director can be held individually liable for his actions as a board member, but that he has no individual power or authority as a board member. The only actions of a board that are legally binding are those taken as a result of a vote of the directors as a whole. No individual, including the chairman of the board, has any authority to pass an action of the board or make a major decision by himself. Outside of board meetings he may exert influence but not authority.

Ordinarily board actions can be passed only by the members of the board in regular session and when the defined quorum of members is present. An exception occasionally is allowed when the action is in writing and signed by each of the directors. This is not a usual procedure. It is not legal to poll the opinion of the directors personally or by telephone and base a corporate activity on such a vote.

One hazy area of director liability is in the field of *ultra vires* acts. An *ultra vires* act is one that is not authorized by the corporation's charter, although the act itself is not an illegal one.

For example, suppose the charter of an organization authorized it to publish books and periodicals. Such a charter gives the corporation the implied power to finance, purchase, own, and operate necessary land, buildings, and equipment for the purpose of printing books and magazines. It is proper for the firm to purchase land for the purpose of constructing an employee parking lot, even though it should turn out that the parking lot is never built.

But suppose the board of directors decided to purchase a lot three blocks away to construct a parking lot for the purpose of renting parking space to anybody who wanted to use it—a public parking lot. This act would be an *ultra vires* act, because there would be no implied or specific authority in the charter to conduct such a business. However, since the act is not an illegal act, the courts would not necessarily force the publishing company to get rid of the parking lot. But if the parking lot turned out to be a bad investment, and poor judgment was used, the directors could be sued for the losses.

There is a lesson here that should be treated with great

care by religious organizations in their extracurricular ventures.

The director owes utter and complete loyalty to his corporation, profit or nonprofit. If he makes a personal profit through inside deals with the organization, there are more than ethical considerations to be examined. Unless it is shown that the transactions took place with the knowledge and consent of the other directors and that the costs to the organization are competitive with costs from outside sources, the director is legally liable and can be sued for damages. There is a whole group of acts that directors can be held liable for. Some of them include:

1. For an unauthorized loan from the organization to a director or an officer that is not repaid.
2. For disposing of corporate property when not authorized or when it obviously would injure the business.
3. For illegal acts of officers carried out with the knowledge or consent of directors.
4. For allowing a transfer of property to prefer certain creditors over others when the firm is insolvent.
5. For declaring dividends to stockholders that do not conform to State laws.
6. For nonpayment of proper fees and taxes to various levels of government.
7. For nonuse or improper use of the corporate charter.
8. For ignoring or violating legal statutes of the local, State, and Federal governments.

This last item is so large a topic that it would take another book to cover the subject. There have been a considerable number of violations of statutes by denominational organizations through pure ignorance of what the statutes were. It must be remembered that ignorance of such statutes *never* shields an organization or its directors from liability. There are occasions when the board and management must seek legal advice, and this is a good reason for having a lawyer on the board of directors when possible.

Ethics of Board Members

Everything that was said earlier about ethics applies all the more to a board of directors. The higher degree of au-

thority and responsibility requires a higher level of ethics. The comments already made about loyalty and confidentiality are appropriate in this chapter too.

It is possible to build a strong argument showing that legal liability and ethics are bound together. I doubt that a director could do anything in his capacity as a board member that would open himself to being legally liable without also being guilty of unethical behavior. The philosophers might debate this point, but I believe it to be true. The trustee relationship to the State that the director has on one side; to the owners (stockholders or constituents) on another side; to the management on another side; and to the creditors on a fourth side, puts him in a position where the utmost integrity and high level of ethical behavior are necessary.

There is one aspect of ethics that pertains particularly to boards rather than committees, and this is the area of conflict of interests. In recent years the world of politics and certain investigations into the activities of many large corporations have made this a familiar term.

Ethical questions get involved whenever a business activity or a major contract of a firm involves another organization that is represented by or in any way connected to one of the members of the board. It is natural that such a director has interests and loyalties, both to the firm for which he is a director and the firm where he normally works and draws his salary.

When the individual director profits from such an arrangement there is not much doubt that the situation is unethical.

When the organization from which he comes profits from the relationship with the firm for which he is a director, we are not so clear. Such arrangements are not necessarily unethical per se, but they do need to be watched carefully.

The ethics of the situation need to be judged on the basis of costs, competition, availability, convenience, importance of suppliers, and openness of the transactions. In many cases perfectly sound and legitimate transactions are involved. In others, secret profits and arrangements may

have been made, and they are thoroughly unethical. There are many cases in the gray area in between that are difficult to judge. When in doubt, it would seem much the better choice to avoid such transactions. Sometimes the problem can be handled if the board member involved absents himself from the discussion and decision and does not vote on the issue.

Some Uses of Boards

It should be obvious by now that the most important use an organization can make of its board is to tap the combined judgment, knowledge, and experience of directors to make decisions and solve major problems of the organization. In this respect the management and the board work together as a team. The board is needed also to coordinate the needs and rights of owners, management, the firm itself, creditors, and sometimes employees and customers. This is the board's explicit authorized function. But there are other legitimate contributions that a board member can make to a firm.

One side benefit that an organization expects to get from its board members is a certain amount of good will or beneficial public relations. A board member represents the firm or organization in many ways to other organizations with which he comes in contact, including his own. A banker on the board establishes good relations between the firm and the bank. Sometimes one firm is a major supplier of another firm, and a board membership may cement that relationship. Lawyers are in a position to keep the firm posted on important legal situations, and in the right situations they have an opportunity to present in a favorable light the company on whose board they serve. Friendships, acquaintances, and business contacts are useful to the organization, both from the standpoint of its product or service and of its public image. Every organization wants to be thought of as a good citizen in the community—active in community affairs and helpful in community problems.

Liaison and coordination are also by-products of board membership. The denomination has many organizations that work closely with one another. One of the best links they have is the membership of the boards, with consider-

able interlocking of directorates. Men who serve on more than one board are in a position to coordinate efforts, eliminate unnecessary duplication, and provide useful rapport between conferences and institutions.

It is not uncommon for organizations to have board members with special skills or training to give study to a particular problem for the firm or to gather specific data for the board to study. Lawyers, engineers, certified public accountants, bankers, personnel directors, labor negotiators, and quite a number of other professionals would be in a position to provide this kind of help. Otherwise, such services often might have to be hired from the outside, with the disadvantages of extra cost and distribution of inside information to outside parties.

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Types of Committees

ONE COMMON method of categorizing committees is to place them into one of the two broad groups—*ad hoc* committees and standing committees. There are other ways to arrange them into types, but this division should be looked at first.

An *ad hoc* [Latin “for this”] committee is one that has been formed for a single purpose, and when that purpose has been accomplished the committee is disbanded. The work of this committee can be somewhat flexible, because that single purpose may be accomplished in one meeting, such as the work of a nominating committee; or it may take months, such as the work of a committee formed to coordinate the merging of two organizations.

The length of time involved or the number of times an *ad hoc* committee meets has nothing to do with the definition. Such a committee has only one assignment, objective, or subject for which it is responsible, and when this single purpose has been accomplished, the committee’s work has been completed, and it will go out of existence.

Commonly, the *ad hoc* committee is the type of committee most likely to have experts on it with technical knowledge to apply to a particular problem. *Ad hoc* committees are popular in religious, educational, and medical institutions because of the frequent occurrence of peculiar, nonrepeating kinds of problems that need to be solved. Examples of *ad hoc* committees are: nominating committees, building-coordinating committees, house committees, investigating committees, fund-raising committees, policy-studying committees,

and arbitration committees. It is common also for a board of directors facing a controversial decision to appoint an *ad hoc* committee to study the situation and bring back a report for the board to consider. One tactic is to appoint an *ad hoc* committee with no intention of ever calling it together. This means that no one will seriously consider the problem further. It is a face-saving device for all concerned. Obviously, if such a committee never meets or reports, this is a tactic with mixed blessings.

A standing committee is one that has continuing and long-lasting jurisdiction over some particular defined area of operation. The committee's function is to meet periodically and give continuous study to or make decisions within this realm of responsibility.

Membership on such a committee can change periodically in whole or in part, but the committee itself remains constantly in existence. Where such membership does change, it is commonly provided that only part of the committee changes at one time. The old members will be familiar with the committee's functions and policies, and new members hopefully bring in fresh thinking.

As examples of standing committees, churches have finance committees, schools have curriculum and academic-standards committees, publishing houses have book committees, a hospital may have a surgical-review committee, and a conference may have an evangelistic-planning committee.

Standing committees usually meet on a regular basis, such as once a week or once a month, arranged so that members know that this is one of their regularly scheduled appointments. The chairman operates from a carefully planned agenda, to which items are constantly being added. These committees may catch up with their work occasionally, but not for long, because the committee has continued responsibility.

To illustrate: a college curriculum committee is responsible for screening all curriculum items before they are presented to the college faculty. Every proposal for new courses, changes in courses, new degrees, and so on must be processed through this committee. It periodically reviews

and restudies such things as general degree requirements, balance between departments, and proliferation of courses. The job is never finished, and that is as it should be. Not only does such a committee have responsibility in this area but it also has quite a bit of authority, because every new proposal must be defended and passed through this committee before it progresses any further. Standing committees frequently have this type of authority along with stated responsibility.

Typing by Purpose of Committees

There are many purposes for which *ad hoc* and standing committees are formed. Some of these are:

1. *Information.* Committees are frequently called together to exchange information. Members who may be involved in separate assignments or research bring their findings to the committee to share with other members.

It is a common and useful practice in an organization to have a weekly meeting of department heads or division managers in which general problems are shared, information about the organization is announced, or weekly plans are discussed. This meeting keeps the whole group informed and is useful in helping each member to know how his area of operation fits in with the general organization. Each member thus feels knowledgeable and a part of the coordinated operation.

Sometimes management finds such a group extremely useful as a sounding board for new ideas and plans. It should be emphasized that not only are such committees a wonderful source of information between members of the committee or for dispersing information from management to members but also they are an excellent source of information for managers who need data from key people in the organization.

2. *Training.* Seldom is a committee formed for the primary purpose of training people in the organization, but people frequently are given committee assignments as a part of their over-all training. Thus, training is often at least a partial purpose of many committees. Large organizations have formed committees of young executive trainees for the

sole purpose of training them in group problem solving.

Committee work gives a person experience in the give and take of decision making. It expands his horizons beyond the realm of his department or job and gives him perspective of the whole organization and how he fits into it. He learns to work with others, to exchange ideas, to contribute and defend his own ideas, and to learn how to use other people's ideas in modifying his own. Training can be an important function of committee meetings.

3. *Task Force.* A task-force committee is one that is looking for specific information for solving a problem or planning a project. It is a group that is expected to dig deep into available information and to acquire data for application to the problem. In most cases the committee is exploring new ground and is an *ad hoc* committee, existing for the one task or objective. Such a group might well assign individual members various phases of a problem to study or specific data to obtain for the whole group. This is a special group appointed by management to pave the way for an important decision to be made for the organization.

4. *Endorsing.* It frequently happens that management needs or desires the endorsement of a particular group or committee before proceeding with a particular plan of action. This does not mean that such a committee would be a group of yes men but that approval is either necessary or advisable for the morale of the organization or coordination of events.

Endorsement is a proper procedure for either a committee or board of directors when management presents a well-organized defensible plan or procedure. It does not follow that endorsement of a plan should be automatic without searching, critical questions from the committee, but once the committee is satisfied that management has drawn up a good plan, endorsement is in order. Endorsement by a group or committee gives the plan status and acceptability that do not come from simple management fiat.

5. *Representation.* It is commonly the purpose in choosing a committee that the members represent certain organizational subdivisions or kinds of thinking. A company-wide committee of eight might have a representative on it from

each of the company's eight departments for discussing company-wide policies. Wherever coordination is a primary organizational need, representation from affected departments or divisions is vital. The interests of each area are represented at the committee meeting so that they can be incorporated into the discussions and plans.

If a controversial issue is at stake, it is common to pick as committee members those who are known to have varying views on the issue. Without balanced representation most committees could be stacked in such a way that the outcome could be manipulated toward the interest of some groups to the detriment of others. Representation from the affected groups is the logical approach to many kinds of committee appointments.

6. *Synergism*. It is usually hoped that a committee can find a solution that is better than any one person is likely to suggest. Going a step further, there is often the hope that the committee solution will be better than the sum of the parts contributed by various members. Often it is better because of the group judgment and synthesis that develop when a committee exchanges ideas and molds new ideas from the group's thinking.

Whether the hope for superior ideas materializes depends on the circumstances and the group doing the work. An undesirable compromise may result rather than a better idea. Regardless of that possibility, many committees are organized for the purpose of generating ideas or plans that the organization is not likely to obtain from any one person.*

Executive Committees

Many kinds of organizations find it advantageous to have an executive committee. Such a group may go by the name of administrative council, management advisory committee, or similar term, but basically they are all alike. The executive committee usually is composed of top administrative officers of the organization with occasionally some representation from other levels.

* The general outline of this section follows that of William G. Shepherd in "How to Capitalize on Committees," *Textile World*, August, 1967.

It is not common for such committees to have any serious legislative or policy-making function, but they are to be a group that the top executive can meet with to discuss current problems.

The usual function of such a group is largely advisory. The manager wants the benefit of group judgment to apply to current situations.

It is up to management what use it wants to make of an executive committee. Some firms do use such groups as legislative bodies and delegate all major decisions and policy making below the board of directors' level to such groups. Sometimes applications of policies are brought to such committees as cases come up or exceptions to standard policies are necessary. Executive committees are good for strategy, planning, and coordinating because they are mainly made up from the management team. They provide a vehicle for close cooperation or group management, with the top administrator as chairman of a decision-making group.

It is the administrator's option whether he wants this kind of committee and what use he wants to make of it. Properly used, it can be an effective aid to administrative action, but it also can be a crutch allowing a poor manager to push his decisions off onto other people. The manager must remain in control of such a group and not allow it to take over his managerial functions or censure his authority and responsibility. Managers usually find executive committees to be a great help.

APPENDIX

APPROPRIATE COMMENTS FROM ELLEN G. WHITE

Basis of Committee Work in the Church

In counseling for the advancement of the work no one individual is to be in controlling power, a voice for the whole, unless it is evident to all that the counsel given is the right one. All methods and plans are to be carefully considered so that all may become intelligent in regard to their relative merits and decide which one will be best to be followed in the missionary work that is to be done in the fields that open before us. It will be well not only to consider the fields to which duty seems to call us, but the difficulties that will be encountered. Committees of counsel, as far as possible, should let the people understand their plans, that the judgment of the church may sustain their efforts. Many of the church members are prudent, and have many other excellent qualities of mind. It is proper that their wisdom should be exercised, that others may become aroused in reference to the great questions to be considered. Many may be awakened to the fact that they should have deeper insight into the work of God."—*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 216.

Counsel on the Conduct of Committee and Board Meetings

Let those who attend committee meetings remember that they are meeting with God, who has given them their work. Let them come together with reverence and consecration of heart. They meet to consider important matters connected with the Lord's cause. In every particular their actions are to show that they are desirous of understanding His will in regard to the plans to be laid for the advancement of His work. Let them not waste a moment in unimportant conversation; for the Lord's business should be conducted in a businesslike, perfect way. If some member of a committee is careless and irreverent, let him be reminded that he is in the presence of a Witness by whom all actions are weighed.

I have been instructed that committee meetings are not always pleasing to God. Some have come to these meetings with a cold, hard, critical, loveless spirit. Such may do great harm; for with them is the presence of the evil one, that

keeps them on the wrong side. Not infrequently their unfeeling attitude toward measures under consideration brings in perplexity, delaying decisions that should be made. God's servants, in need of rest of mind, and sleep, have been greatly distressed and burdened over these matters. In the hope of reaching a decision, they continue their meetings far into the night. But life is too precious to be imperiled in this way. Let the Lord carry the burden. Wait for Him to adjust the difficulties. Give the weary brain a rest. Unreasonable hours are destructive to the physical, the mental, and the moral powers. If the brain were given proper periods of rest, the thoughts would be clear and sharp, and business would be expedited.—*Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 256.

Let everyone who sits in council and committee meetings write in his heart the words: I am working for time and for eternity; and I am accountable to God for the motives that prompt me to action. Let this be his motto. Let the prayer of the psalmist be his prayer:

"Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips. Incline not my heart to any evil thing." Psalm 141:3, 4.—*Testimonies*, vol. 7, pp. 258, 259. See also *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, pp. 417, 418; *Gospel Workers*, p. 448.

In all our business meetings, as well as our social and religious meetings, we want Jesus by our side as a guide and counselor. There will be no tendency to lightness where the presence of the Saviour is recognized. Self will not be made prominent. There will be a realization of the importance of the work that is to be done. There will be a desire that the plans to be laid may be directed by Him who is mighty in counsel.

Could our eyes but be opened, we should behold angels of heaven in our assemblies. Could we but realize this, there would be no desire to hold to our own opinions upon unimportant points, which so often retard the progress of the meeting and the work. If there were more real praying done, if there were more solemn consideration given to weighty matters, the tone of our business meetings would be changed, elevated. All would feel that the assembly had met to lay plans for the advancement of the work, and that the object of the work is only to save souls.

All that we do and all that we say is transferred to the

books of heaven. Let us not be guilty of bringing down God's work to the level of common business transactions. Our standard must be high; our minds must be elevated.

There are always a few who think, when their brethren are pulling forward, that it is their duty to pull back. They object to everything that is proposed, and make war on every plan that they have not themselves originated. Here is an opportunity for persons to develop inordinate self-confidence. They have never learned in the school of Christ the precious and all-important lesson of becoming meek and lowly. There is nothing harder for those who possess a strong will than to give up their own way, and submit to the judgment of others. It is difficult for such to become teachable, gentle, and easy to be entreated.

In our business meetings, it is important that precious time should not be consumed in debating points that are of small consequence. The habit of petty criticism should not be indulged, for it perplexes and confuses minds, and shrouds in mystery the things that are most plain and simple. If there is that love among brethren which will lead them to esteem others better than themselves, there will be a giving up of their own ways and wishes to others. It is our duty to study, daily and hourly, how we may answer the prayer of Christ, that His disciples may be one, as He and the Father are one. Precious lessons may be learned by keeping our Saviour's prayer before the mind, and by acting our part to fulfill His desire.

In our business connection with the work of God, and in handling sacred things, we cannot be too careful to guard against a spirit of irreverence; never, for an instant, should the word of God be used deceitfully, to carry a point which we are anxious to see succeed. Honor, integrity, and truth must be preserved at any cost to self. Our every thought, word, and action should be subject to the will of Christ.

Levity is not appropriate in meetings where the solemn work and word of God are under consideration. The prayer has been offered that Christ shall preside in the assembly, and impart His wisdom, His grace and righteousness. Is it consistent to take a course that will be grievous to His Spirit and contrary to His work?

Let us bear in mind that Jesus is in our midst. Then an elevating, controlling influence from the Spirit of God will pervade the assembly. There will be manifested that wisdom which is "from above," which is "first pure, then peaceable,

... full of mercy and good fruits," which cannot err. In all the plans and decisions there will be that charity that "seeketh not her own;" that is "not easily provoked;" that "thinketh no evil;" that "rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;" that "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."—*Gospel Workers*, pp. 446-448.

The disposition to say witty things that will create a laugh, when the wants of the cause are under consideration, whether in a committee meeting, a board meeting, or any other meeting for business, is not of Christ. This untimely mirth has a demoralizing tendency.—*Evangelism*, p. 642.

Those who compose our councils need to sit daily at the feet of Christ and learn in His school to be meek and lowly of heart. As they are only weak and erring men themselves, they should cherish feelings of kindness and pity for others who may have erred. They are not prepared to deal justly, to love mercy, and to exercise the true courtesy which characterized the life of Christ, unless they see the necessity of being in union with Him. The trustees [of our Battle Creek institutions] should ever realize that they are under the divine eye, and act with a continual sense that, as finite men, they are liable to make mistakes in laying plans unless they are closely connected with God and are seeking to have every deficiency removed from their characters. The divine standard must be met.

Everyone who serves in board meetings needs to seek most earnestly the wisdom from above. The transforming grace of Christ should be felt in every meeting. Then the influence of the Spirit of Christ upon the hearts of those present will place a right mold upon their work. It will quell tumultuous actions and charm away the unhallowed effects of that worldliness which makes men sharp, critical, overbearing, and ready to accuse.

When these councils meet, a few words of formal prayer are offered; but the hearts of those present are not brought into harmony with God by earnest, importunate prayer, offered in living faith, in a humble and contrite spirit. If the trustees divorce themselves from the God of wisdom and power, they cannot preserve that high-souled integrity in dealing with their fellow men which God requires. Without

divine wisdom, their own spirit will be woven into the decisions they make. If these men are not in communication with God, Satan will surely be one in their councils and will take advantage of their unconsecrated state. Acts of injustice will be done, because God is not presiding. The Spirit of Christ must be an abiding, controlling power over the heart and mind.

You should take the Lord with you into every one of your councils. If you realize His presence in your assemblies, every transaction will be conscientiously and prayerfully considered. Every unprincipled motive will be repressed, and uprightness will characterize all your transactions, in small as well as in great matters. Seek counsel of God first, for this is necessary in order that you may counsel together properly.

You need to watch, lest the busy activities of life lead you to neglect prayer when you most need the strength prayer would give. Godliness is in danger of being crowded out of the soul through overdevotion to business. It is a great evil to defraud the soul of the strength and heavenly wisdom which are waiting your demand. You need that illumination which God alone can give. No one is fitted to transact His business unless he has this wisdom. . . .

It is the worst kind of folly to leave the Lord out of your councils and to put confidence in the wisdom of men. In your positions of trust you are, in a special sense, to be the light of the world. You should feel an intense desire to place yourselves in connection with the God of wisdom, light, and knowledge, that you may be channels of light. Important interests are to be considered, which relate to the advancement and prosperity of the cause of present truth. How, then, can you be competent to come to right decisions, to make wise plans, and to give wise counsel unless you are thus connected with the Source of all wisdom and righteousness? The business to be transacted in your counsels has been considered altogether too lightly. Common talk, common remarks, comments made on the doings of others, have had a place in these important meetings. You should remember that the eternal God is a witness in all these gatherings. The all-seeing eye of Jehovah measures every one of your decisions, and they are compared with His holy law, His great standard of righteousness. Those in the position of counselors should be men of prayer, men of faith, men free from selfishness, men who will not dare to rely

on their own human wisdom, but who will pray earnestly for light as to the best manner of conducting the business entrusted to them.—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 559-561.

Before our brethren assemble in council or board meetings, each one should present himself before God, carefully searching the heart and critically examining the motives. Pray that the Lord may reveal self to you so that you may not unwisely criticize or condemn propositions.

At bountiful tables men often eat much more than can be easily digested. The overburdened stomach cannot do its work properly. The result is a disagreeable feeling of dullness in the brain, and the mind does not act quickly. Disturbance is created by improper combinations of food; fermentation sets in; the blood is contaminated and the brain confused. . . .

Some may ask, What has this to do with board meetings? Very much. The effects of wrong eating are brought into council and board meetings. The brain is affected by the condition of the stomach. A disordered stomach is productive of a disordered, uncertain state of mind. A diseased stomach produces a diseased condition of the brain and often makes one obstinate in maintaining erroneous opinions. The supposed wisdom of such a one is foolishness with God.

I present this as the cause of the situation in many council and board meetings, where questions demanding careful study have been given but little consideration, and decisions of the greatest importance have been hurriedly made. Often when there should have been unanimity of sentiment in the affirmative, decided negatives have entirely changed the atmosphere pervading a meeting. These results have been presented to me again and again.—*Testimonies*, vol. 7, pp. 257, 258. See also pp. 258, 259.

Many committee meetings and other meetings for counsel have taken an unhappy tone from the dyspeptic condition of those assembled.—*Gospel Workers*, p. 242.

Changing of Membership

It would have been much better to have changed the men on boards and committees than to have retained the very same men for years, until they supposed that their

propositions were to be adopted without a question; and generally no voice has been lifted in an opposite direction. There are men who sit in council who have not the discernment that they should have. The comprehension is narrow and egotistical. A change is needed.—*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, pp. 417, 418.

Assignment of Ministers to Committees and Boards

Not a few ministers are neglecting the very work that they have been appointed to do. Why are those who are set apart for the work of the ministry placed on committees and boards? Why are they called upon to attend so many business meetings, many times at great distance from their fields of labor? Why are not business matters placed in the hands of businessmen? The ministers have not been set apart to do this work. The finances of the cause are to be properly managed by men of ability, but ministers are set apart for another line of work. Let the management of financial matters rest on others than those ordained to the ministry.

Ministers are not to be called hither and thither to attend board meetings for the purpose of deciding common business questions. Many of our ministers have done this work in the past, but it is not the work in which the Lord wishes them to engage. Too many financial burdens have been placed on them. When they try to carry these burdens, they neglect to fulfill the gospel commission. God looks upon this as a dishonor to His name.—*Testimonies*, vol. 7, pp. 254, 255; *Gospel Workers*, p. 425.

It is a great mistake to keep a minister constantly at work in business lines, going from place to place, and sitting up late at night in attendance at board meetings and committee meetings. This brings upon him weariness and discouragement.—*Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 250; see also p. 251; *Gospel Workers*, p. 271; *Evangelism*, pp. 662, 663.

Those who are employed to write and to speak the word should attend fewer committee meetings. They should entrust many minor matters to men of business ability and thus avoid being kept on a constant strain that robs the mind of its natural vigor.—*Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 247; see also p. 246; *Gospel Workers*, p. 422.

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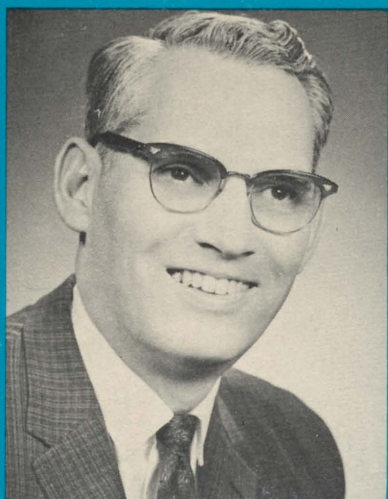
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ABOUT THE BOOK

Everyone, it seems, has served on a committee. But not everyone knows how to make a committee meeting produce the best results. Robert E. Firth, chairman of the Business Administration Department,

Andrews University, has written *Guidelines for Committee and Board Members* to show how the work of any organization—from the local church level to the General Conference—may benefit when committee chairmen and members apply recognized principles of leadership and group dynamics.

Within this handbook's nine chapters are suggestions that apply to groups ranging all the way from small, informal committees to legally constituted institutional boards of directors. Specific suggestions show how to prepare for, conduct, and follow up after committee and board meetings, from the points of view of chairman, secretary, and member. This indexed volume also includes an appendix of appropriate quotations from the writings of Ellen G. White, and a bibliography.

Dr. Firth, a member of the Andrews University faculty since 1964, received both Master's and Doctor of Philosophy degrees from the University of Nebraska. He is a member of the Academy of Management, the Midwest Economic Association, the American Business Law Association, and the Seventh-day Adventist Lawyers Association. He is author of the book *Public Power in Nebraska*.